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SNIDER

LINCOLN AND ANN RUTLEDGE

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LINCOLN

AND

ANN RUTLEDGE

An Idyllic Epos of the Early North-West.

SOUVENIR

of Abraham Lincoln's Birth-Day, 1912

BY

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Lincoln and Ann Rutledge.

Book First.

New Salem.

List to the clang of the bell with its clamorous
trills from the belfry,
Rollicking round the little red schoolhouse
perched on the hillock,
Calling together the town to the resonant
clack of its clapper,
Tinkling far over the valley its silvery un-
dulations,
Till it drops to a warble in tune with the
Sangamon's ripple,
And in a whisper of music it dies on the dis-
tant prairie.

Hark! how it breathes its last breath in melodious carols concentric,
Weaving with wavelets of sound the tremulous heart of the hearer,
Who in harmonious throbs for a moment floats over the border
Till he is rapt to the rhythm of spheres in chorus majestic,
Feeling afar the cosmical echo of ancient creation,
When the sun and the moon and the stars were singing together.

Now the tongue of the bell has lisped its mellifluous message,
And has enwreathed in its tenderest rounds the listening farm-house
To the first milestone from town at the prayerful calm of the noon-tide;
Even the ox of the field knows it well, and looks up from his grazing,
While the dog in response will utter a howl from the barnyard,
And the big chanticleer will perch on the top of his dunghill,
Strutting amid his polygamous household and crowing defiance.

Meantime the farmer has quitted his labor of
cradling the harvest,
And the raking and sheaving and shocking
the sheaves of the grainfield;
Soon he has saddled old sorrel and starts on
a jog to the village
Where he will meet all his neighbors and lis-
ten to Abraham Lincoln
Telling the manful task of the time in drollery
storied,
How the migration of peoples has swept from
the East to the Westland,
Bringing the dawn of a world which is new
in the line of the ages,
Piloting over the prairies the passage of civ-
ilisation.

Gathered already in arguing groups are the
chiefs of the township,
Through their talk oft buzzes the name of
President Jackson,
Now the well-head of words for every tongue
in the Nation,
Who had the power of doing the deed attuned
to the folk-soul,
Also of writing his name on the land in lum-
inous letters,
Which would always relume in the flame of
party discussion.

Stout Ebenezer, the Squire, well rounded in brain and in body,
Right decider of lawsuits, the voice of the village's justice,
Strides up the knoll to the well-sweep and dips out a drink of fresh water,
With the new gourd which hung at the well in front of the schoolhouse.
Worthy ambition was his: to be the community's builder,
And overseer self-appointed in charge of the general welfare;
With him are talking in shirt sleeves two workmen of handicraft clever,
Gray-haired William the wainwright, and big-thewed Peter the blacksmith,
Both of them integral men of the town's best communal spirit.

Doctor Palmetto was present, snapping satirical flashes
Openly at the whole world which slyly included himself, too,
Chiefly, however, at Lincoln he fired his battery scornful.
He was the one only man in the town who had studied at college,
Crumbs of his lore he strewed in his talk, for instance, the names of the muscles.

Grave James Rutledge failed not, erst the community's founder,
Aged but lofty in mien and retaining his chivalrous manner,
Father of blooming Ann, the rarest rose of the village;
And she also had come to see and to hear with her parent
Just this orator Lincoln, whose words had a heart in their cadence,
While his tenderest tones would tremble in tune with her glances.

Soon the tillers had flocked from their toil on each side of the country,
Blent with their spirit and speech still lay the great fight with the Indian,
And their perils upon the frontier when the land was first settled,
When the savage's tomahawk spared not even the suckling.
Every man in the crowd had his valorous venture to tell of,
How he waylaid and slew in his trap the treacherous red-skin,
Or had driven him headlong over the wroth Mississippi.
Living and throbbing in rage still rose the strife of the races,

Which enkindled the border in furious blazes of warfare
For the lands of the Northwest, aye for the continent total.
And that struggle each borderer bore in his bosom down deepest,
Long in a line transmitted from father and grandfather also,
E'en from the grandfather's father descended the heritage hostile,
Bringing the ancestor's feud from the shore of the distant Atlantic.

So the people assembled, still wrought up with memories warlike,
And they had their own hero now present, Abraham Lincoln,
Who had fought against Black Hawk, the reddest of all the red devils,
Who had headed the volunteers valiant of Sangamon County
Up to the foe's front line, but never got sight of an Indian.
Him all the people had chosen as Captain in stress of their struggle,
Thrice he enlisted to fight and stayed till the danger was over.

True pioneer, he was stamped with the traits
of his fathers before him,
Who had faced the frontier of their country
for five generations,
Ever in movement along with the stride of
their race to the westward.
Abraham Lincoln's grandfather also was Ab-
raham Lincoln,
Who had been slain by an Indian's bullet
shot from an ambush;
Still that bullet would throb at times in the
brain of the grandson,
Making him feel the vengeance of race e'en
when he resisted,
For the two sides, to avenge and forgive,
lurked deep in his nature.
All the folk were flocking around him, whose
soul he well represented,
Getting ready to vote for themselves in vot-
ing for Lincoln,
For he had lived just their life, and gone
through their fiery trial.
Soldiers were there who bragged of the deeds
of their valorous captain,
And repeated the stories he told in the lull
of the campaign;
Thus were tripping the tongues of a hundred
that day in New Salem,
All were electioneering and fighting anew
the old battles.

Look! a character weaves of a sudden around through the masses,
That was Jack Kelso, good fellow general, yet good for nothing,
Never once missing his chance at a verse or his turn at the bottle,
Long since known to the town as its poet, and laureled its rhymesmith,
Needful vocation as well as that of the doctor or blacksmith,
Though he must work for nothing and add his own board to the bargain,
Poesy being its own sweet reward on the Sangamon sluggish.

But forget not the man, the living conduit of knowledge
For the young and the old of the village, the schoolmaster Graham;
To whose name the true title had slid down the ages from Homer—
Mentor of yore, the appearance divine of the Goddess of Wisdom.
To the youth who was longing to learn of the deeds of the fathers.
Mentor Graham, the master, all named him by right of his office,
Frontier pedagogue, bearing the torch of the past to the future

Right on the line of division between them, the zone of their mingling;
Charactered was he in word and in deed by his life on the border,
With a gleam of prophecy in him, which shone resurrection,
Nor were wanting some far-back flashes of sage superstition,
Which believed still the fact of the Fates and retributive Furies.
Though he knew no Greek, some scraps he had picked up of Latin
From an old grammar he learned once by heart, and from an old law book;
But as he sauntered one day deep-sorrowed around in a graveyard,
From a tombstone he took and treasured the word most real of his soul's faith—
That was the word he chose for the motto inscribed on the school-bell
When it rose perched on the belfry to ring overhead to the town-folk—
Hoary device with letters antique in the old Roman language,
Word invoking a weird meditation in all who might see it,
Mystical name of a world that seems going yet coming—RESURGAM.

Book Second.

Doctor and Squire.

"What is the matter? This town has already
slowed up to a standstill;
Climbing its hill-side it stops—why, even it
starts to go backward—
Sick is the place, I say, with a mortal malady
dying."

Wroth was the mood of the Doctor, whisking
his tongue like a skalpel,
Loving with words to draw blood on the
world, as if lancing a patient—
Doctor Palmetto, lettered leech of the San-
gamon Valley,
Quick to spy the disease and delighting to
dwell on the symptoms,

Be the seat of disorder in man or the State
or the Nation.
But just now he was feeling the pulse of ailing
New Salem,
Little town of the border, once eager to be
the great city,
Dreaming to rival old Rome in its swell of
an empire's ambition,
But with a droop in its hope now unable to
take a step further;
Still the Doctor's fast breath kept winnow-
ing words like a wind-mill,
Which could never be stayed till the whiz of
its wheel was expended;
Thus he pumped up the past in speeches of
sore reminiscence:

"Three years ago I reached here—what a
life on this hill-top!
Houses sprang up over night, the mechanic
and merchant
Hurried hitherward after the throng of the
onstreaming people;
In the wake of their wains which sailed one
after the other
Over the prairie's green ocean, I floated
prospecting my future,
Which uplifted itself a colossus just where
I stand now,

Bidding me halt on this spot and tie down
my fate to this hillock.
That was soon after I quitted with honors
my Medical College,
With a diploma which scoffing me looks from
its frame in my office;
Maledict be the day I strode up yon slope to
your village!"

Swiftly the storm-stressed Doctor, through
the tense strain of his feeling,
Gave a spank with the flat of his hand to the
innocent pine-box
Which he sat on to argue in front of the store
with the town-folk.
Yet he told not all—he kept hidden the point
of his story,
Deftly enwreathing it round with excuses and
far-fancied reasons
Why he suddenly stopped one day at New
Salem and hung out his shingle.
Business he won and its prize—and still he
proclaimed himself loser;
Everybody suspected the cause, though keep-
ing it silent,
Lest if, but breathed, it might swell up the
wind to a prairial cyclone.

To him stood talking the Squire of the town,
Ebenezer, well-rounded
With five decades of dinners of hominy, corn-
pone, and turkey.
Days of youth he had seen in Kentucky, that
lucky Kentucky
Eloquent ever through lips of her men and
looks of her women.
Now he was judge of the township, the even
dispenser of justice
Unto the people, who never disputed his law
or his judgment.
Weighing his words in the scales of his of-
fice, the Squire responded:

"Nay, I cannot agree with you there, if you
please, my good Doctor;
You have given one side of the case, you being
the plaintiff.
Hear now the other which Justice demands
should not be forgotten,
Let me, though I be judge, state the side of
the voiceless defendant."
But the Doctor could hardly be stayed in his
argument's flood-tide,
He uprose from the store-box and stressed
his speech with his gestures:

"Well I remember the day I arrived—the town and the country
Had assembled and perched on the bluff overlooking the river;
Up the full channel came puffing in labor triumphant a steamboat
Named the Talisman, which in the folds of its vaporous magic
Played before every eye on the hilltop the phantom colossal
Of a great city here destined to rise on this river.
Lofty a Capitol grew in the clouds with its dome and its columns,
First embracing the town and the county within its small circuit,
Which kept widening, widening, till the whole State it had rounded,
Then beyond and beyond, when at last it encircled the Nation,
While the Sangamon swelled to the roar of the huge Mississippi,
Bearing aloft on its bosom a spectral fleet to the Ocean.
Such was that Talisman, Father of Lies, in the form of a steamboat,
Foaming up stream and dancing delusion before all the people.
Lincoln was pilot, plying its paddle against the high waters,

Him too magnified bravely that magical Talisman's witch-work
Throwing his shadow up to the Capitol builded in cloudland,
Till he rose to be pilot supreme of the storm-girt welkin,
High overarching us all to the bound of the farthest horizon.
That was a specter at which the whole people ran mad with delusion,
Riotous fantasy suddenly routed and captived man's reason,
And some still feel the spell of that ghost in our sinking New Salem."

Then the Doctor would snort a contemptuous sniff through the nostrils,
Jealous, twice jealous he was of the tall young man of the people,
For between them rivalry rose for the village's honors
All of which focused to fire in the glance of a beautiful maiden.

Forceful shot the retort of the Squire, the just Ebenezer,
Passionate friend of the townsmen's hero, Abraham Lincoln:

"Aye, that pilot we soon are intending to start for Vandalia—
Capital now of the State, and yet but a step in the ascent—
That he may rise with the years to the stature which we have dreamed him.
Candidate he has been named for making the laws of the people;
Soon the election comes off—and you must vote for him, Doctor."

But disdain gave a twitch to the lips of Doctor Palmetto,
Aristocratic disdain for Lincoln, the popular fabler,
Who already was famed for his art in spinning a story,
And for the wit of his ways in winning the love of the people.
But another's love he had won, and that was the trouble—
That was the point of the poison which stung in the soul of the Doctor.
Still he continued his travail of chewing the cud of his wormwood,
In his own pain he somehow could take a malevolent pleasure,
Willing to show all his torture of heart by jealousy's demon,

Making himself unhappy today by memories bitter.
So he spoke up again, while circling the globular Squire there
On the pine-box reclining at peace with himself and the world, too:

"Never since then has a steamboat been seen here—never!
Rapidly that one had to retreat when the waters receded.
With it has vanished the air-built Capitol lofty of cloudland,
Which then seemed on the point of dropping to earth at New Salem.
Do you know the sight of that boat was my future undoing?
'Twas the illusion which charmed me to stay in this dolorous village."

Here he took off his hat and thrust it, repeating his statement,
Down on the pine-box till it was broken to creases not to be smoothed out,
While the face of the Squire had put on a quizzical silence,
As if secretly doubting, in spite of the emphasis double,

For Ebenezer often had heard of a contrary story.
Then replacing his hat, the upstrung Doctor continued:

"I had just come from a bit of a town by the Michigan lakeside,
Eager to win the topmost prize in life's lottery regnant,
And I chose for my fate New Salem instead of Chicago!"
Whereat he toned down his nerves in a taciturn stride round the store-box,
For there throbbed in his heart the true motive for his selection,
Which he would never let out, although it were couched on his tongue-tip.
Soon he returned to his words, still ensconcing his thoughts in his bosom:

"Both towns then were the same in size with similar outlook,
But see their difference now in grappling scythed Time by the forelock,
And in outspeeding the slash of his weapon, the doom of the mortal!
But that Talisman lured me to choosing the dwarf instead of the giant,

Dazzling my fantasy into a cataract golden of fortune
Which fell pouring its treasure out of the future down on my pathway.
Hope herself I dreamed I saw perched on the top of this hillock,
Giving me many a courteous smile as if she would woo me:
But the prize of my life I have lost, e'en if I go elsewhere,
Never I can it recover—that upspring of heart I once felt here."

So the Doctor complained, diagnosing the case of New Salem,
Fallen out with himself and the world, he told his own ailment,
All the pain of his town and his time in tone he reflected,
While a personal tinge would color each word of his censure,
And underneath disappointment outspoken lay something unspoken;
Blaming the Talisman blameless, he only could blame what himself was.
From the hot-blooded South he had come where thrives the Palmetto
Stamping itself on the State of his birth as a seal with its symbol;

Bitterly he was the hater of President Andrew Jackson,
In the Jacksonian town of good democratic New Salem,
Valiant, vociferous hater, armed to the teeth for a word-war,
Hence the citizens laughingly labeled him Doctor Palmetto,
Loyal son of the State defying Old Hickory's power.

Won all the lore of his medical calling, his way he turned westward,
Flinging his future into the flow of the people's migration
To the wide West in the North, where dawned the new Nation.
He was the one only man in the township who could read Latin,
Which in odd bits of old Virgil he pompously mouthed to the rustics,
Oft in response to Jack Kelso, the town's Shakespearean spouter,
When he declaimed to the crowd at the corner the bad dream of Gloster.
But again the just Squire made ready to answer the Doctor,
Balancing nicely the right on the edge of his tongue as a knife-blade,

Telling him not to impute his own fault to
the fault of the village,
And to see in himself the malady which he
complained of.
But the Doctor upsprang as soon as the sen-
tence was spoken,
Cutting the air with forefinger pointed in
throes of excitement,
Quite foreclosing the lips of the Squire with
passionate outburst,
For he felt Ebenezer's sly thrust to the seat
of his temper.
Thus at his country he hurled in a breath
his thunderbolt final:

"I believe not only this town is going to
pieces,
Aye this Nation is breaking up into the units
that made it,
Those original States first joined will dissolve
next this Union."

Such was his thrust at the Squire who had
pricked down into his heart's sore,
Which, unconfessed, turned all of his words
to a poignant confession.
So with his woes he flooded the world from
his perch at New Salem,

Spreading them over the land to the White-
house in Washington City,
Reading himself disappointed into the fate
of his country.

Scarce outspoken had been the vibrant tones
of the Doctor,
When a neighboring farmer drove up to the
store with his wagon,
Catching on time the last fleet words of the
passionate speaker.
One of the wheels was untired and broken,
another was shaky;
While the old wain-bed crazily lopped and the
harness was cranky.
Excellent man was this farmer, yet bearing
the stamp of the border,
Born pioneer and bred, and so were his fath-
ers before him.
Long they had stood on the line dividing the
red and the white man;
Where that line would advance, the True-
bloods also advanced there,
Taking unbidden their place to the fore of
the marching frontiersmen.
Uncle George he was called, in full George
Washington Trueblood.
Telling his little misfortune, he snapped the
thread of discussion:

"I was bringing to town some truck, some potatoes and pumpkins,
Suddenly down went my wagon, and tossed me into a puddle,
Now I am rolling around on three wheels, and instead of the fourth one
See this pole of a hickory sapling which holds up the axle.
It was Lincoln who came to me helping me out of my trouble;
Somehow the tire quit the wheel, refusing to bind it together,
One of the feloes slipped off from the spokes and left a big gap there,
So that no rim ran round to fasten the rest of the feloes;
Then I picked up the pieces and brought them along in my wain-bed.
But that Lincoln I like whose knack is to come at the right time,
Helpful he sprang to my aid from under the mulberry shade-tree
Where on his bench he was sitting and talking to lovely Ann Rutledge,
Who then shot down the path to the Lady Eulalia Lovelace.
Soon my load of eatable truck we piled by the roadside,
Hiding it under a cover of leaves and of brambles we gathered;

It I hope still to market to you, if the hogs
do not get it.
But this wagon I have to restore to a run-
ning condition,
And I now scheme to make stronger than
ever my wheel from its fragments."

So the brave man would mend each rent in
the garment of living,
And at the same time thriftily show the mind
of the farmer.

See the Doctor turn cloudy with streaks of
rubicund lightning
Flashing over his face at the praises of Abra-
ham Lincoln.
Deeper still stirred him the news of that
couple conversing together
Under the mulberry tree, the resort of the
village's lovers.
But he kept his hot heartburn unworded in
spite of its torture,
Though a venomous sarcasm coiled on his
lips for a moment,
Still he suppressed it in pride and feelingly
spoke to the farmer:

"Bad is your luck today in this turn of the wheel, Uncle Georgie,
Wheel of misfortune is yours and the world's and ever keeps whirling—
But it is common—common to you and to me and to all of us present,"
Sighed sympathetic the Doctor for others, yet for himself, too;

"Also my cart—the truth I confess you—has gone all to pieces,
And to the town itself has been lost not only its tire-ring
But the hub and the spoke and the feloe of wood are now floating—
Floating, methinks, each part by itself down the Sangamon's stream-bed
Into the mad Mississippi away to the limitless Ocean—
Aye, much else around me I see that is going to pieces."

But right then the firm voice of the judge, just Squire Ebenezer,
Who was calmly surveying the injured member before him
Could be heard with gravity's mien delivering judgment:

"Easily all these parts can again be made whole—and yet better—
By the wainwright William just yonder, with help of his blacksmith;
Doctors they are of sick wheels, even able to doctor the Doctor."

But George Washington Trueblood—well worthy his name and his namesake—
Pondered not only his wagon, but also he thought of his country;
For as he came he caught the bodeful retort of Palmetto,
Patriotic he answered the sneer of the cynical critic:

"Do you know, as I trundled along, I thought of our Nation
Holding together the States like a wheel by the tire of the Union,
And I remembered your State which struck at the bond that has bound us;
Some years ago that was, but still is working the ferment."

Fiery flushed the Doctor, his sensitive spot had been tingled

By the sudden sharp prick of a tongue like
the point of a needle,
For he was born underneath the shade of the
fan-leafed Palmetto,
And its image seemed still to be blooming
within his hot bosom
As if planted amid the warm fens of the Caro-
line sea-coast.

But Ebenezer the Squire, bright bringer of
peace and of justice,
Saw wrath rising between the two speakers,
the Northern and Southern,
And foreboding a war already between the
two sections,
Sprang right into the middle with words of
mild mediation,
Yet the strong lines of his visage gave them
the force of a judgment:

"Come now, let us go down to the shop of
William the wainwright
Who can adjust so nicely the hub and the
spoke and the feloe,
That they all turn together as one whenever
the wheel whirls.
There we shall watch too the tire fresh-forged
and new-banded of iron—

Iron which grapples the rotating members
in grip adamantine,
Bringing obedience unto the law like the roll
of the planets.
Lincoln I think will be there, the big sledge
he oft wields for the blacksmith,
Circling his ponderous stroke on the anvil
with swing of his arm's length,
As did once the old Titan, whose fable I read
in my Plutarch.
Possibly too a speech he will make us, and
tell a new story,
Or a romance he may spin of adventure in
war against Black Hawk—
Candidate popular soon to be sent to the next
Legislature."

But the Doctor failed not to spray out some
jets of his gall-tongue,
Antipathetic he was to the people's own hero,
tall Lincoln,
Who overtowered him far in stature as well
as in temper,
Smaller the talent he owned, although his
learning was greater.
Rumor too whispered around in the village
that he was jealous,
And was looking at men and the world
through love disappointed.

"Only two days ago I was called to prescribe for James Rutledge,"
So the Doctor began, intoning his utterance blandly,
"Who had been shaking with chills of beneficent Sangamon's ague;
There I noticed fair Ann, his daughter, the village's flower,
But not so blooming as when I beheld her the day I arrived here,
Nor so buoyant as when she engirdled the sword around Lincoln,
Loftiest, lankest Captain of words in the war against Black Hawk.
Absent-minded she seemed, with warring lines in her visage,
Spare of her eyes and stinted of smiles was the mien of the maiden,
She who once was so lively and lovely in courteous presence.
It is said her betrothed, for a year now gone on a journey,
Never has written her where he may be or what he is doing."
Then the Doctor uprose from the pine-box and peered through the doorway:
"Look at this store paralytic, once leaping with life in its business,
Store of Abner the absent, 'tis sick of consumptive New Salem;

Many declare he has quit, forgetful of promise, or jealous,
It is added that she has been shining her favor on Lincoln
From the moment she clasped to his waist that sword-belt ancestral—
He too with many an artful device is thrumming her heart-strings;
She is not happy, I doubt she be healthy, filled with some soul-strife.
Introverted was often her look as if in a struggle,
Watching with sympathy double both sides of herself in a battle."

So the shrewd Doctor tongued on in his bent, forecasting diseases,
Giving a glimpse of himself as he dwelt on the troubles of others,
Quite unable to quell into silence the fury prophetic.

Then they all looked down to the road of the Sangamon bottom,
Seeing a line of white-covered wagons one after the other,
As they threaded the flats and bended the bridge of the river.

"See yonder," the Doctor broke in, "the great stream of migration
Surges ahead to the broad Mississippi and possibly farther,
Turning aside from our place with a scoff, not deigning to tarry
Where no hope can be seen on the hill-top, bidding them hither."

While the last word of the Doctor was pulsing its tune on the air-waves,
Suddenly sounded the clang of the bell from the knoll of the school-house,
In a kind of response, dingdonging the speech of the speaker,
With a call to each child of the town to prepare for the future,
And to each man of the town to keep himself young with new knowledge.
When the Squire had heard the last echo whispering silence,
Breathing its ghost tintinnabular into the sigh of the breezes,
He peered over the valley afar and reflectively added:
"Think! in their skull-pans uncombed those people are bearing the New World,
Going forward to some young settlement, then again forward,

Ever creating afresh their free institutional order,
Somehow driven by impulse to girdle the earth with migration
From the far-off aforetime, bridging the past to the present
In a long-linked chain made of towns whose soul is their communal freedom.
Thus I came from Kentucky, my father thus came from Virginia;
Still I remember the passage over the rough Alleghenies,
And again I may start''—here he stopped the push of his discourse,
Lest he might seem to relapse to the querulous mood of the Doctor.
Then with a jolly round guffaw to which his abdomen laughed echoes,
Up he sprang from the store-box, shaking with life's satisfaction,
As he lipped in good-will strong words which meant a decision:
"'Tis enough! let us haste to the shop of William the wainwright
Who has a turn for splicing what's parted in man or in matter,
And can feel in each stroke of his work the beat of the world's soul.
Noble artisan is he, hating disease and division,

Be it shown in the wheel of a wagon or mind
of a mortal."
Snapping his words the Doctor muttered an
answer disdainful:
"I do not like him at all—that mad-eyed me-
chanic and dreamer
Calling his shop in conceit philosophy's home
at New Salem;
Leave me alone here—nor can I abide the
demagogue Lincoln,
Leader you praise him—misleader I damn
him with all his flattering fables,
Tattered clown to the tatterdemalions, their
sycophant silly."

Book Third.

Wainwright and Blacksmith.

Leisurely down the street from the store strolled Squire Ebenezer,
Quite untuned at hearing his friends besmirched by the Doctor—
Aye his two best friends and the two best men of the village—
So he mused to himself about Lincoln and William the wainwright.

Following close at his side the sun-tanned tiller was driving
His laborious team whose muscular bodies slow-stepping
Ever were ready to play out a hearty full pull at each mud-hole.

On the rickety rim of his wayward wagon now balanced
Farmer George Washington Trueblood turned and addressed his companion:
"Yes, our Doctor is making his days all curdle to clabber
From the sweet milk which Time, the old cow, lets drip from her udder.
On his lips and his looks he dolefully wears a sour stomach,
Life is a little too much for him here in our little New Salem,
It were better he should before night set out for Chicago.
Talent is his, but more highly esteemed by himself than by others;
Learning he has too, and shows it, as when to us boors he talks Latin,
But if I dare diagnose the Doctor himself diagnosing,
In his heart turns acid a droplet of love disappointed;
Best of the medicines which he can take is to flee to Chicago."

Slowly weighing his words Ebenezer gave his decision:
"Champion fault-finder always the Doctor has been—he was born so—

Childhood's balsamy breath, methinks, he drew discontented,
Reared in the shadow disdainfully cast by the haughty Palmetto—
The dissatisfied tree and blaming the rest of the forest.
Then his profession is lure to hunt out the malady hidden
Till he loves the pursuit of disease and loves the disease too;
Keen espial of ill turns character, yea his religion."

Thus one side of the case the Squire had rightfully set forth,
But on the other side also he spoke a fair word, as his wont was—
Since he could not help pleading for plaintiff as well as defendant:
"Still I confess the critical speech of the Doctor is true too,
As the medicine always is bitter, e'en if it cure you;
No puffing Talisman ever will creep up again through the channel
Flushed by yon Sangamon streamlet, so shrunk is it now to our vision;
That fair dream has flitted far-off with the treacherous steamboat,

And the canal is not going to flow this way
by our doorsteps.
How the great city we saw is downfallen even
from cloudland!
And our air-built Capitol's dome with its col-
umns of marble
Seems to be sportively waltzing away from
us on the horizon,
Circling around northeast as if ready to
settle at Springfield,
While we now have to sweat to keep anchored
to earth our few cabins."

Then the Squire secretively muffled his voice
for a moment
As if unwilling to hear the words he was
going to utter:
"List, I feel in New Salem herself the sly
throb of an impulse
Growing the wings of migration once more
for a flight to the westward;
Still not dead are we yet, though unwell as
the Doctor declares us—
Only a Sangamon ague"—the Squire was
suddenly silent,
For he heard two strokes of the resonant clap
of the school-bell
Calling the time of the day from its belfry
to gather the children,

While his bosom beat loud in response to its
musical air-waves,
Which then echoed his deed in helping the
folk of the future
That they possess their ancestral estate of
man-building knowledge.
But the farmer, mindless of mishap, broke
out in a rapture,
As there fell on his ear the sounds from the
shop of the wainwright:

"How all roads of this country are lining
just into one center!
That is the magnet now turning to hope each
lift of the footstep.
Here is the shop of the wainwright, whose
heart seems the heart of this village;
As I look over the land, the highways are
forming a network
Like the outspreading spokes of a hub—that
hub is this workshop,
Where is the home of the wheel, the racer
and bearer of burdens.
What an upspring I take in leaving the look
of the Doctor!
Somehow I feel as if I am passing from
ailing to healing.
Tell me, why is it I enter a presence renew-
ing, whole-making?

And a welcome within me I hear to the weal
of this workshop?
Now I can draw a fresh thought that is sent
from the soul of all being,
And I feel all misfortune, suffering, death to
be part in my wholeness."
Even a breath in sign of relief he suggest-
ively puffed forth.

Then replied Ebenezer, the cool, to the out-
burst rhapsodic:
"Yes, the people throng hither from over
the bound of the township,
From the circumference streaming along each
road to the center,
Loving the workshop, loving the workman,
old William the wainwright,
For the excellent handicraft which is the
pride of his spirit,
Eager to gaze at the musical strokes of the
whirl of his fore-arm,
As he tunes into form with his tools the re-
fractory oakwood,
Quite as if singing a strain of the secret of
Nature by motion,
Which seems able to utter such thoughts far
better than words can."

Both of the visitors gazed at that picture of new revelation,
And they hearkened elate the harmonious hit of the hammer,
Which kept time in the heart along with the bulge of the biceps.

But the Squire looked up at a log in the wall of the workshop:
"Do you know," he musingly spoke, "it was I who cut down these—timbers,
Rolling them up to the site of this shop by the help of the handspike?
Thus the first seven log-cabins were built with floors made of puncheons,
Then we dammed up the river in summer, erecting the gristmill.
That was the birth of the infant New Salem —scant five years old now—
But in a day it seemed born and full-grown, as if planted from heaven;
Leaped up the shop and the store with the round red school-house as center,
And the best bell I could find in St. Louis I bought for its belfry,
Sweetly calling each child of the village to come to its lesson.
That the first duty I deemed, the schooling of all of our children.

Soon the increase of people ran up with the coming of babies,
So we have young George Washingtons growing along with you old ones,
Jeffersons many come bouncing to light among us Virginians,
Several Andrew Jacksons have lately arrived to abide here,
Lustily feeling at home in good democratic New Salem.
So we still keep alive our great men reborn on the border.
See! This log I remember—the adze slid from it and cut me."

There the Squire hit a beam with his cane as they stood at the doorway,
And he showed proudly the scar once stamped as a seal on his body.
Then he spoke out more freely, delighting to hear his own accents:
"Do you know, Uncle George, I would like to do all of it over—
Build another community, also set it to running,
Till it would march of itself on the road I had made to the future;
Some such passion lurks in me, again it may rise to the surface."

As the twain trod over the sill, they were
smit with a wonder;
Silent they stood in a spell that bound for a
minute their footing,
And untongued them totally, viewing with
vision voiceless
Sunrise in an old man whose face overflowed
with his radiance,
Plowed in luminous furrows and sown with
the light of his soul-world.
Raying a wreath of gray hair which bristled
with sunbeams his forehead
He would shake out his heart in the shock of
each laboring hand-stroke
While his eye scintillant of soul would shoot
forth its sparkles,
Flamed with the cosmical thought of creation
unwordable ever;
Radiant every act was of love, of love the
All-maker.

He was so sunk in his work that he hardly
looked up at the comers:
This was William the wainwright, making
the wheel of a wagon.
Into the hub the stiff spokes had already
been cunningly fitted,
Each jagged out by itself and thrust in
another direction

Off from the rest of its mates, repellent it seemed of its kindred,
All in a flight from themselves and the center from which they had started,
Somehow striving to shun in a scorn society's order,
Fiercely refusing to join in the task of co-operation.
Each individual spoke of the hub shot defiantly outwards
Seeking the rim of all space, but finding the zero eternal.

Mark now the wainwright becoming a look of affection enfeatured,
As he joins them around in a circle with mallet and wimble,
Fitting the feloes into a ring which clasps them together,
Shaping to one all the parts which hated before, and divided.
How he loved his vocation as godlike and wrought in its spirit!
By his labor he lived, still more his labor he lived for.
Food it brought to his body, food it gave to his soul too;
Making the wheel of a wagon, the world he seemed to be making.

In his workshop he was himself the Creator's
own image,
And the whole universe saw he rise rounded
to strokes of the Builder,
Aye the big round of the universe whirling
attuned to the wain-wheel
While it would whelm all space to its sweep
both inward and outward,
Cycling the aeons of future and past to the
tap of its timebeat.
For the wainwright also was maker in small
of creation,
Which he renewed in each piece of his handi-
work however little,
For he felt God in the draw of his saw and
the hit of his hammer,
Felt the pulsation of Love divine which uni-
fies all things.

Silent in awe the visitors stood as if present
at worship,
Till the Squire at last spoke up in words
sympathetic:
"You appear not to notice us, thrilled with
the rapture of labor,
As if praying you might be by work to the
worker supernal,
And you venerate what you are doing just in
the doing,

Making yourself in your deed the reverent
bearer of Godhood.
Into the heart of your wheel your prayerful
eye is now gleaming,
Lifted to peer in its glances behind the drawn
veil of all Nature."

Slowly, almost unwillingly, William looked
up from his labor,
Though his hand still held the keen tool in
the grip of its cunning,
As if delaying to break the sweet bond of
some hidden communion;
But his speech was gentle, though tenderly
trembling with age-throbs:
"Yes I try to live out in my life the blessed
old adage,
Hymning it oft in a tune to my soul: *to labor
is prayer.*
All my deeds are chanting aloud their orisons
holy,
If you can hear their intimate song in the
strokes of the workman.
Maker I am through the Maker Himself ful-
filling His promise,
God the first Laborer is, Creator of all things
each moment;
For with each moment the whole is being
renewed in His workshop.

Doing my own little task I pattern me after the Master,
Making this wheel to-day I share in the act of creation,
Realizing a model divine which I bear in my bosom,
Through the toil of my hand I utter my fervent petition."

Pointing his look at a flower that eyed him with blooms at his window,
Like so many sweet glances of love for his age's renewal,
And then rolling his vision skyward, spake William the wainwright:
"See this cowslip—it is a wheel—and a perfect wheel-maker—
Rounding and ever repeating its hub and its spoke and its feloe,
And even painting its parts in a green and a white and a golden,
So it applauds me with glances of hope and woos me to work well,
Often recalling a flowery love which from me once vanished.
Is not the earth too a wheel, revolving around on its axis,
As it rolls on its sky-made road encircling the sun with its girdle?

Even the cosmical wheel I have glimpsed in
a moment supernal,
Rimmed with the galaxy starry and bowling
the universe Godward."
So his spirit took voice in a rapture of lofty
communion
With some inner experience not understood
by the others.

But to the glow of the wainwright responded
the cool Ebenezer:
"Let us come back to our earth here, speckled
with little New Salem,
Which cannot use your big wheels of the
globe or the sun or the cosmos.
Be it yours to connect us with neighboring
towns and their peoples
By your handicraft subtle here shown in this
rotary wood-work,
Which will bear us around on the earth till
we mount to the firmament stellar,
Since the Sangamon sullen has failed us, yea
the canal too."

Thus was William's fair dreamland drenched
with the prose of the present.
But unquenched in his ecstacy spake he, fore-
casting the future:

"Listen! a greater than mine is soon coming
—far greater, far stronger—
Tis a wheel I still mean—I see it now roll on
the prairie,
Not made of wood like this one of mine so
light and so slender,
Bearing a burden more heavy and circling
its axle more swiftly,
Roaring it runs, fire-breathing its nostrils,
the dragon of fable
Is to be harnessed for work, aye saddled and
reined for the rider.
This is my lot and my hope and my prayer:
I shall be transcended."

Look, the last feloe is fitted, the rim now
beveled and rounded;
Soon the wheel is released from its block,
and caressed by the master,
Whose delight is perfection within the small
bounds of his wheelcraft,
Feeling the flawless All can be put in the
small of the smallest.
Rolling his wheel roundabout and revealing
its rotary virtue
He admired its blameless behavior as well as
its shape without blemish;
Playful he teased it as if it might be his
dearest companion.

Then to his action was suited the word of
William the wainwright:
"Now we must trundle it over the alley to
Peter the blacksmith,
Practical Peter, my half for completing my
work and my soul too,
Who will hoop it with iron around this rim
of the feloes,
That they be held to their place and their
task in their circular union,
Made to withstand the stress and the strain
of all coming disruption.
He will iron the hub too with bands and rivet
them tightly,
That the center may yield not, whatever the
thrust of its lading,
And disrupt not, however mighty the quake
of collision—
Peter can do it, my counterpart, making me
whole in my wheelcraft.

There we may see too the man of the future,
young Abraham Lincoln,
Whom we purpose to send by our votes to
Vandalia law-making.
Not unlike to wheel-making is, to my mind,
the vocation,
As it builds to a harmony whole man's doings
discordant,

Trying to legislate for him the make of the cosmical order,
For on the Law the universe stamps itself as the first model."

So they all started to rolling the wheel to the shop of the blacksmith,
Peter, whose labor was love but whose love was very laborious,
When of a sudden the farmer woke up with a lapsed reminiscence:
"What! Abe Lincoln! I saw him this morning under the shade-tree
As my vehicle broke with its load and splashed in a mud-hole.
There he sat with Ann Rutledge upon a looped settle of grapevines
Which he once bent to embraces and wound in a seat for two persons;
For what purpose it was I wondered until I had seen them;
Happy he looked in reading some verses, to judge by the jingle;
They did not see me, so occupied were they with rhymes and themselves too,
Till the crack of my axle crashed into their happiest moment,
Dragging them down to the world which was clashing and swashing about them.

Ann sprang up with a blush and sped off to the four-pillared mansion,
Home of that gracious soul, the Lady Eulalia Lovelace,
Ready to reconcile troubles of heart for wife and for maiden,
Ever the healer of wounded hope for all of the towns-folk.
Lincoln had meanwhile skipped to my wagon, he took off his hat too,
How he stammered his words, not so fluent they ran as his wont was:

'Here Uncle George, is your newspaper which you receive from St. Louis,
Old French town on the river, unsainted in spite of its saintship,
Name of a royal crusader far back in the time medieval,
Marching to capture his heathenish foe, he himself was the capture—
Sometimes I muse if that city will share in the fate of its patron.'

Never before did Lincoln so wander whenever I heard him,
Jolt so his words through his windpipe which seemed a corduroy roadbed;

Still he kept forcing his tones on the air
though flushed all his forehead:
'You are aware I am Postmaster now of this
town of New Salem,
Mail I came to deliver, Miss Rutledge ex-
pected a letter,
But it did not arrive, I had then to see her
and tell her.' "

Here the old farmer knowingly winked and
nudged Ebenezer
In the broad-belted midriff, then he went on
with his prattle:
"Ended this story so happily, what a relief to
our Lincoln
Pumping his lungs for a word which rose
from sources unwilling!
See now! the flow of his speech jets up like
a fountain Artesian:
'Look at this hat here,' said he, unwrinkling
the stress of his visage
'Veteran 'tis of many campaigns, an office
it has too
For its long service in warfare of wear—our
Postoffice 'tis now—
Letters three and newspapers two, but un-
wrapped, for I read them
With each subscriber's consent—that is
yours,' and he reached me my paper

Which I skim with delight for its praise of my President Jackson.
Then he clapped on his long lank hair his rickety head-gear
With its contents, yet one wee letter I glimpsed in his hurry;
No address was on it outside, but a heart drawn in red-ink,
Deftly he tucked it in under the rest, as if trying to hide it;
At his big bony fingers crooking so nimbly I wondered.
I was going to quiz him but swiftly a word he now thrust in
Just before me, and whirled round my mind on myself in a moment,
Saying right at the point of my trouble where I was straitened:

'Dear Uncle George, I see you have struck a small snag of misfortune,
Come, let me prop up your axle here sunk till you get to the wainwright
Who can refit your wheel and make it run better than ever.
Mender he is by nature, not only of broken-down wagons
But of spirits sore-breached in the battle so stressful, distressful,

Which life kindles in all who are born in this
world's separation,—
Which the man wins by the help of his
friends, but helping himself too.'

Thus bespoke me in sympathy's tones the
soft-hearted Lincoln
Watchful of mishap befallen us mortals and
ready to stem it,
Reaching us aid at the pinch unforeseen, as
a Providence human.
So he said, so he did; then turning aside he
addressed me:

'Now I am off, but later to-day I hope I may
see you,
When from my hat I have emptied these
pieces of mail to their owners,
And have got back my tongue for telling the
people a story.
Let me confess you my mind has been plan-
ning a speech of some moment,
This afternoon I am going to give it at Peter
the blacksmith's.'

Off he sped through the meadow, unwilling to
drop me a fable,

Though I asked him to fit to my case some
beast out of Esop.
Always had been so chatty his wont, that a
moment I pondered."

Thus the farmer's frank tongue kept flushing
in gossipy freedom,
While the wheel went bowling along to the
shop of the blacksmith—
Man of big brawn, most muscular arm of the
village, but peaceful,
Yet in support of the Law ever ready to smite
the wrong-doer,
Or the public disturber, if Squire Ebenezer
should call him—
Never quite able to wash from his forehead
the grime of his workshop,
Which would cling to the roots of his hair
through soft soap and water;
Still the massed might of his fortress rose
up the tower of labor,
And unless he had ironed the wheel, it could
never have run long
Crushed to earth in its wood-made members
with burden of carriage;
Aye the communal wheel he helped iron with
character massive.

Peter the real, symmetrical half of William the ideal—
Friend of the dreamful wainwright, but too his complement solid,
Making him workable who in his thought was the talent transcendent,
Fusing terrestrial Will with Intellect dwelling in Heaven.

William had kept in his heart and transfigured an image departed
Yet eternally present within him and glimpsed in his labor,
Furnishing ever the fountain of Life with Love the renewer.
That was the spirit the people could see in the stroke of the workman,
And could hear in an undertone tender of voice from his soul-world,
When he would speak of the pain and the gain of all living and dying,
E'en sympathetic with Death for the sake of Life's reconstruction,
Loving the loss of the loved in the blessed return of the spirit—
Spirit absent in Time, but becoming Eternity's presence—
For without Death, he would say there never can be Resurrection.

Book Fourth.

Abraham Lincoln.

Laughter in unison greeted the three approaching the smithy,
From a roundabout rout of men encircling a speaker
Who overtopped them all by the length and the strength of his stature,
Needing no platform to lift him above the yeomen around him,
Who would waken the clouds from their slumberous dream in the welkin
With an echo of joy as he popped out the point of his story.
That was candidate Lincoln electioneering the people
If perchance they would send him as lawmaker down to Vandalia,

Whence he might start on the trail that leads
from the State to the Nation,
For at the end of that lane he could glimpse
in the distance the White House,
As every lad of the land could, declaiming
the speeches of Webster.

But when the orator saw the sage wain-
wright slip up and listen
With Ebenezer the hard-headed Squire and
Trueblood the farmer,
Aye, George Washington Trueblood, the
rough-palmed plowman of prairies,
Who with his practical sense united a love
of the fable,
There was a change in his look attuning the
words of his discourse;
These he deftly directed to tap a fresh note
on the eardrums
Which the new hearers were stretching to
throb in response to the speaker,
Who then opened a fountain sonorous that
welled from his soul's source,
As he started to image his world like his
favorite Esop—
Him who imparted the word to the things
that Nature left wordless:

"Once on a time the horse was pulling a
well-loaded wagon
When from behind of a sudden the wheel
in a fit began groaning:
'Oh my hard lot! this burden to bear I am
able no longer!
Splinters soon I shall be, crushed under the
weight of oppression!'
Then it broke and it fell with a crash and
a splash in the mudhole
Where it lay in its ruin bespattered and
mired," murmured Lincoln,
Touched to a sigh by his own fellow-feeling
with words of his picture.

Then he suddenly stopped and wistfully
gazed for a moment,
Over the heads of the crowd in the distance:
at whom was he gazing?
Look! he is balking right at the pivotal pull
of his discourse,
All of his glances seem kindled to love in
a revery wordless;
But he recovered: "the horse looked around
and neighed back reproaches:
'Weakling wooden and worthless, shrilling
the shriek of a coward!
Not to bravely upbear what I painfully pull
with my labor!

Still I am glad of this happy mishap for I
can rest now,
Yea, I shall prance to yon pasture and crop
to my fill its lush grasses!'—
So the horse in good luck was taunting his
neighbor unlucky,
When the load was lifted and plumped on
his back without mercy.
See him in turn fall down by the side of
the wheel in the mudhole,
For the burden has broken him too with its
ponderous treasure,
Which is now strewn in the stress of the
owner along the wet wayside,
Pumpkins, potatoes, and apples, fine food
for the swine and for man too."
"That is the fact, it all happened to me,"
broke in Uncle Georgie.
"Abraham, let yourself out, and spin me
here into a fable."

Lincoln swerved not to reply but gleamed
as if probing the center,
That he might bring to the surface the in-
nermost sense of his story:
"That old wheel of the ages lies shattered,
e'en should it be mended,
To the thrust of the time no longer it shows
itself equal;

And that horse too is fallen beneath the
fresh pull of our epoch,
Wagon and wheel and horse must win a new
soul with its body,
Spirits, methinks I can see them, awaiting
a grand transformation,
Aged, decrepit in shape, but in throes of a
youthful renewal—
Even unreasoning things must have too a
regeneration."

Here the fabulist halted, stemming the soar
of his fancy,
Glaring a glance inquisitive into the face of
the farmer
Whom he had helped from the mud at the
mulberry tree in the morning;
Nor did he falter to peer far down in the
eyes of the wainwright,
Whose approval he caught in the radiant
sport of their sparkles,
Which illumined the path of his soul to its
nethermost fountain.

Then a fresh coin the fabulist fused in the
mint of his fable,
Giving a visible form to his fantasy's farth-
est outreach:

"Yes, a new horse must be reared to race
on our Western prairie,
Steed with the speed of the storm, he never
gets tired or lazy;
And a new wheel must be forged for his
wagon far swifter and stronger
Than the old one was ever, and whirling
along a new road-bed.
All of them are to be formed of the fiercest
material metallic—
All the wheel and its pathway of rails and
the horse, too, of iron;
They have started already to fleeting along
the Atlantic,
But they now must be turned to the home
which Nature foreplanned them,
To our new world's domain, the newest in
time and in spirit."

Strangely the orator fluent now lapsed at
a word to a stammer;
Once more over the heads of the people he
peered in the distance,
But when he noted one hearer to turn for
a look in the same way,
Quickly he picked up the thought he had
dropped, and mended his discourse,
Though they all unwittingly wondered just
why he had wandered:

"Now to the practical point I come of my fabling fantastic:
Give me your suffrages that I may go to Vandalia this winter,
Helping to forge to the deed my airy witch-work of dreamland,
And to harness the new-born horse of the age to his wagon
That I too may become for my folk a wise wainwright."

Loudly upstormed the applause, but louder the cheer of sage William
Rang over all of the voices together in waves sympathetic,
Seeing his favorite wheel endowed with a new incarnation,
For of that work he often had dreamed in rapture prophetic.
Made to his mind the civilized world must be wheeled in its progress,
Barbary only is wheelless, such is the barbarous Indian.

Feeling the worth of the moment, the speaker now pointed his discourse
That it might prick to the brain of his hearers and prod them to action:

"Thus, only thus, can we ever be one with
the rest of our country,
And our country in turn be united in bonds
adamantine;
We shall become a part of the life of the
globe in its wholeness,
Live to ourselves in a corner we cannot, we
have to associate,
Long has that been the dearest ambition of
little New Salem.
It would feel the full heart of the world in
its own petty pulse-beat,
And would share in the purposeful plan of
the ages, divinely aspiring".

So the tall Lincoln spake to one man and
grew taller than ever,
That one man whom he saw to the soul was
William the wainwright.
Slowly he took off his eyes and turned them
to glancing elsewhither,
Down to the rivulet shallow and stagnant
which stank in its stream-bed,
Pensively musing, "Once I believed in the
Sangamon yonder,
And I piloted hitherward up the full stream
the first steamboat,
While I floated above on a billowy river far
larger—

River of Hope that fell like a waterfall golden
from cloudland;
But the treacherous boat in a panic retreated
forever,
And the high vision of Hope fled after it,
shunning the valley.
No more delusion, O friends; instead of the
lie of a shadow
Now the substance itself of our striving we
grip by our ballot,
Capturing with it the horse and the wheel
and the highway of iron.
I would the hammer be, forging again the
refractory metal,
If you will send me to sledge in the work-
shop of law at Vandalia."

Scarce had the word left the throb of his
lips when the shout of the blacksmith
Shot to the ear of the speaker, hallooing a
summons to labor,
That he might prove by his deed just what
he had said to the people:

"Come now, Abraham, sledge me this tire
whose hoop I am rounding
For the new wheel which hither was rolled
by William the wainwright

Restless until he beholds the work of his handicraft finished,
That it may rival the starlit wheel of the dome of the heavens.
Then you can make a new speech on your sledging, a better than this one,
And a fresh fable you surely can forge from the blast of my bellows,
Or an old tale you can pick from the bountiful pouch of your noddle.
Come, you are the best sledger that ever here wielded my hammer,
Striking the brawniest blow to subdue the rebellious metal,
Making it yield to the law and welding both sides into union."

Soon then Peter the blacksmith was plying the pole of his bellows,
Playing it up and down in the clutch of his fist and his forearm;
And the shop grew grim to a choke with the grime of the charcoal
Through whose cloud-wreaths spitefully snapped the sputtering sparkles,
Like the scintillas of lightning along the dark seams of the sky-rack,
Over whose black-browed crags leap thunders pursuing the flashes.

See now, the iron is hot to a hiss at the line
of division;
Peter the smith with a twitch of the tongs
took the tire from the blazes,
Whirling it down by a dexterous turn to the
top of the anvil,
Which kept clinking and clanking afar with
its clangerous cling-clang,
As the tire he smote white hot in the glow
of its fusion,
Shrilling its scream in response to the stroke
of his one-handed hammer.
Mightily bulged at each blow the muscular
brace of his biceps,
While the thews of his neck would swell up
to battle responsive,
And from his forehead the runnels of soot
would stream down his cheek-bones,
Till they would drop from his chin and the
tip of his nose too,
Like the Sangamon's channel o'erflowing its
banks in the springtide,
And on its surface eddying all of the ooze
of the upland.

Still intoned he a song attuned to the ring
of the iron,
Or would whistle bravouras piercing the
clang of the anvil,

Which to the sound of the tire would shriek
with the wail of the tempest,
Hit by the hammer of Peter the smith at the
point of their contact,
As he welded their severing parts to har-
monious wholeness,
While in the swing of his voice he re-echoed
the music of labor,
Crooning some long-gone ballad of love and
piping the chorus.

But still mightier blows must be struck at
the tick of the crisis
Rightly to round out the tire to its circle
of iron unbroken.
Up steps Lincoln, clutching the sledge in
the grip of his knuckles
When he had carefully hung up his hat on
the peg of a tie-beam—
Post-office hat, it was famed for holding the
mail of the township.
Wide was the sweep of his arms as he swung
his implement massive;
Clutching the handle with both of his fists,
in rotation concentric
Over his head through the air he whizzed the
ponderous hammer,
Till it smote down on the tire and welded the
line of disjunction,

Rounding the ring of the wheel to a musical
cycle completed,
Cunningly winding its melody into the song
of the smithy,
With a far-away echo like to a spheral con-
cordance.

Next the iron enringing the rim was clamped
on the feloes,
Bending them slowly together into a union
forever.
Nor was the hub forgotten, it too was band-
ed with iron
Lest in a strain it might split by the stress
of the spokes at the center.

Hark! in the midst of the notes of the smithy
and piercing the smoke-cloud
Tolled the time-telling call of the school-bell
rung from the belfry,
Waving its way to the workshop in throbbing
circles concordant,
With whose ring and refrain it mingled its
musical cadence.

Lincoln harkened the strokes of the bell as
they gave him the time-beat
From above somewhere, with resonance ton-
ing the darkness,

To whose dulcet vibrations accordant he sledged with his hammer,
Stressing all of the school-bell's measures with accent Titanic.
Thus the orchestra played in that workshop of Peter the blacksmith
On its instruments chimed to the stroke of the strong-boned musicians,
Far attuning the town to the resonant key-note of labor,
Hovering over the Sangamon valley in wavy caresses.

All had noticed how carefully Lincoln had lifted his head-gear,
Precious post-office hat like a jewelled crown of a monarch,
High straw-hat with a tetering brim and a dent in its top-knot,
Hanging it high on a peg where none but himself could get at it.
Strangely forethoughtful he seemed in that act and in eyeing oft thither,
For he had given out all of the mail that day to its owners
In the political round of the town that he made in the morning.
Yet of that broad-brimmed bee-hive of straw, why so tenderly watchful?

Right in the whirl of his sledge he would
train on the hat a sharp eye-shot.
Some rare mystery hides there of which he
is veiling the secret,
Dual the man is, a half on his work, but a
half has strayed elsewhere.

But now the labor is done and the hammer
is put in its corner,
Firmly united the parts, the whole wheel will
run on the prairie,
Doing its share of the work of the world
without going to pieces.
All applauded the workmanship deft of Peter
the blacksmith,
All applauded the powerful deed of the can-
didate sledging.
In it they felt the forecast of something
that lay in his future;
What it might be they knew not, but wished
to be tuned to his spirit.
So they called for a speech from their spokes-
man—a fact or a fable
Drawn from the Black Hawk War, with
fringes of fun and of fancy,
Whose light play would bring to them all a
tickle in common,
But might likewise ensconce the deepest
thought of the era.

Then the wainwright slid from the crowd with a look of approval,
Quickly he stepped on a stool, as if to respond to the speaker,
But he reached to the peg and took down the hat which hung high there,
Courteously handing it over with compliment heaped on the owner,
Who had hurried at once to the spot on seeing the danger.

But just look at the luck! for out of the hat flew a letter
Like a dove white-winged it fluttered around in the coal-smoke;
Down it fell in the floorless dust much-trod of the smithy.

Not a trace of writ was upon it, no name, no postmark—
Yet a heart with its blood-tint was drawn on the cover in red-ink.
Lincoln jumped at a leap ten feet to the spot when he saw it,
Picked it up with a blush and tucked it into his bosom.

All were shouting with guffaws, "Abraham, read us that letter,
Never could it have come by mail, it is one of your own make;
Tell us who is the girl, and whether she goes to Vandalia.
Now instead of the speech, just give us the nub of the letter.
We shall not vote for you, Abe, unless you read us that letter."
Then they yelled the refrain in chorus: "the letter! the letter!"

See the tall candidate plucking his hat from the hand of the wainwright,
Who had soulfully glimpsed from afar a glint of his meaning;
More profusely rolled watery drops on the slant of his forehead
Than even when he was whirling the sledge for Peter the blacksmith.
Strange! the wan of his cheek had suddenly flushed to a ruby
While his eyes sped their sparks on the ground but not on the people,
And his lips had a smile, as if merrily tasting a gallnut.
All his body grew stiff, on stilts he seemed to be stalking,

As he strode out the shop in long strides e'en
while he was saying:
"Friends, good day to you—elsewhere busi-
ness I have now to see to."

So young Lincoln bore off in his breast the
embarrassing secret.
Outside next to his heart lay the letter, with
symbol ensanguined,
While the crowd much wondered about that
mysterious missive,
Guessing whom it was meant for and what
was its purport—
Why should Lincoln so blaze up in feature,
and hurry to hide it?

Only one man there present had seen it be-
fore on the outside,
Uncle George Trueblood, who now spake out
his limited knowledge:
"Well I remember that heart with its red
on the white of the letter,
When the postmaster took off his hat to hand
me my paper,
Near the mulberry tree where Lincoln had
sat with Miss Rutledge;
Strange it seemed then, but I somehow for-
got to ask him about it."

So this riddle with others is left for the future to settle,
Which, untying one knot, will tie up another and greater.

Meanwhile Lincoln had sped out of sight of the shop of the wainwright,
When a wag in his humor gave voice to the common suspicion:
"Let me dare it foresay that Lincoln again has a business
Which will charm him awhile underneath the mulberry shade-tree."
Others kept citing the past with its crop of rumors fantastic,
Nor was forgotten the gossip which gushed from the Talisman's visit,
When the whole town had a rollicking dance on board of the steamboat.

Still in the practical matter before them there was an agreement:
All resolved on the spot to vote for Abraham Lincoln,
Even if he ran off to get rid of reading the letter,
And of relieving the people's suspense by confessing the picture.

Not the new wheel nor the horse nor the wonderful railway of iron,
Had been able to stir up the talk of the folk of New Salem
Like the wafture so weird of the sign of the red-heart presageful,
And of Lincoln's attempt to hide it at once in his bosom.

When he had fled, the company melted away from its center,
William the wainwright and Squire Ebenezer and Trueblood the farmer,
Each on a line leading homeward dreamily drifted asunder,
With the citizens who had hearkened the speech, and still marveled
Not alone at the sayings, but at the silences also—
More mysterious were the deep silences than the deep sayings—
Which had oracled Lincoln's whole conduct and left him a riddle.

Still was heard from the shop of the blacksmith the clangor of iron,
With his joyous shrill whistle which fifed to the drum of his labor,

Whistle which tuned all the puff of his bellows and clink of his hammer,
As he pounded and rounded the metal in time with his music,
Puckering up to a point his muscular lips for an air-hole
Through whose vent he would drive out his breath with the might of the windstorm,
Mid the spirt of the sparkles which shot in the smoke of the worksnop,
Like the links of the lightning which rattles its chain down the welkin,
Making his stithy the home of a Titan's huge harmony happy.

Then on the hill-top would chime the symphonious note of the school-bell,
Blent with keen cadences welling up out of the shop of the blacksmith,
Tenderly wreathing in concord of sounds each house of New Salem,
Sounds undulating together in love far over the landscape,
Till they lisped out their mutual sighs to a swoon in the distance.

Book Fifth.

Ann Rutledge.

Just when Lincoln had sharpened his speech
to the point of his fable,
Trumpeting far the miraculous change of the
wheel into iron,
In the roll of his voice upturning the folds
of the future,
Over the square he glanced and glimpsed the
form of a maiden
Whose light trip he well knew, for he often
in rapture had watched it,
As it seemed lifting on wings the gracious
turn of her body,
While she sped up the street away from the
house of her father,
Thrilling the air with an ecstasy born of her
beautiful motion,

Causing the orator just for a moment to stammer forgetful
Till he had picked up the stitch he had dropped in knitting the sentence,
So he soon healed in his hearers the ominous breach of attention.

That was Ann Rutledge, the flower of all the village's maidhood,
Since the hope of her heart was blooming from every feature,
And was shedding its magical spell on the eye of each gazer;
Not untinged by a sorrow, which tingled a chord in the bosom,
Trembled her look sympathetic with others, yet with herself too.
She was going to ply at a quilting her dexterous needle,
And perchance to gossip a little about the last wedding,
But still more she would take off her mind from the struggle within her,
Which she no longer could leave in its stress altogether unspoken.

Balm she knew would be ready to drop with the word of a woman

Who a solacer was in the throes of the conflict of mortals,
Pouring the weal of her sympathy into the woe of the stricken.
Also that woman was famed as the Lady, the neighborhood's Lady,
Crowned with the title by all—the Lady Eulalia Lovelace—
Widow she was of an officer highly esteemed in the army,
Who in the bloom of his youthful promise had fallen in battle,
Gallantly fighting the foes of his country along the wild border,
Only a year or two after he quitted his home in Virginia,
Whither she wished to return, awaiting her father's arrival,
For she still longed, like an exile, for the old manor ancestral
By the seaboard, with its hoar line of heritage English.

Now she dwelt with her two young sons at the edge of the village
Where stood her mansion spacious, garlanded round with a garden;
Propped was the roof of the porch in front with massive Greek columns,

While it heartily faced to the world with the
gracious look of a giver,
Famed the best house on the road, of generous structure colonial,
Always ready to give to the stranger a courteous welcome.

Thither the maiden was pensively tracing the
line of her footsteps,
And was turning a corner not far from the
shop of the wainwright,
When she heard the applause of a crowd mid
gushes of laughter,
While the tall form of a man addressing them
rose on her vision
With a loud thump of the heart to see the
success of the speaker,
Who beheld her in turn and balked at the pith
of his story,
Just for a moment upset by the sudden surprise of her eye-shot.

But she shied from the spot and tripped more
rapidly onward,
Hardly she glanced at the store as she passed
it, of Abner the Absent,
Though it waked in her soul the tremulous
thrill of a discord,

Which in a pain she would flee from, although
it would ever go with her—
For the owner was still her betrothed, in
spite of his strange disappearance.
Soon she had come to the round red school-
house perched on its hillock,
Where was centered the mind of the town—
the head of its shoulders—
There she felt a relief as she thought of her
happier school-days
Which she and Lincoln had spent in their
studies, growing together
Into a union of soul no blow of Fate could dis-
sever.

There her memory stopped her a minute to
look at the belfry
Which like a hat was set on the conical head
of the schoolhouse,
When it suddenly started in tones well known
to address her—
Tones of the bell which so often had joyously
throbbed to her heart-beats,
Bidding the young to their lesson, and calling
the people together,
Whispering also to her a sweet hope mid the
lines of her school-book.

Tenderly mused she the time when she went
to the sapient master,
Mentor Graham, the faithful, hard hitter in
word and in action,
Till each pupil had learned how to read and
to write and to figure;
Yet the teacher selected the best for higher
instruction,
Which he gave to the boy and the girl of tal-
ent transcendent.
Well his brusque tongue was liked, in spite of
one little suspicion
That the deep folds of his brain secreted a
doctrine forbidden.

Hardly to think it she dared, but the circular
walls of the schoolhouse
Had enclosed her whole heart, and brought
it to beat from that center
Where she the counterpart found of life's
most intimate kinship
Subtly ingrown with herself, ere she knew it
in each aspiration,
Though already her hand she had promised
in troth to another.
That was the perilous edge to which Time had
been leading the maiden,
The remediless strife between two duties, to
love and to promise,

Was now cleaving her bosom atwain in their mutual warfare,
Which to avoid she hurried away with her eyes insphered in their tearballs.
Hardly would she confess to herself the love that had sprouted
And was daily ensnaring her life in its intricate network;
She, the promised, loves him who never has promised though hopeful;
He, the unpromised, loves her who has given away her first promise.
Conscience kept slashing her soul both ways, in duty divided,
As she recalled a hot sermon on Hell by Cartright, the preacher;
For the sense of the sinful lay charactered deepest within her,
And would rend her atwain in the throes of her tragedy's conflict.

Pensive, forebodeful she flew on her path to the end of the village,
As if to run from her fantasies which like dragons pursued her,
Quitting the bell-tongued schoolhouse tipped with the clang of its belfry,
Which now fell from above like a knell on the ear of the maiden.

But how can she esecape from the mightiest
power within her?
Running away from her giant, into his arms
she has fallen,
Fleeing out of her soul-world, the more she
has to stay in it.

Soon she has glided beneath the mulberry
tree by the wayside,
One by one now dropping its leaves in the
lap of their mother,
The proliferous Earth who entombs in her
womb her dead children
That she may bear them anew to life in a glad
resurrection,
After ripe autumn's decline and the death of
gray winter,
Ever fulfilling her motherly part in the round
of creation.
Under that tree was the rustic seat of cut
twigs and of grapevines
Deftly intwined together to many a turn and
contortion
By the hand of Lincoln who made it the favor-
ite place of his trysting,
Lonely for one and large, for two it was fitted
so neatly
As it lay on the way to the Lady Eulalia
Lovelace.

Now in spite of an inner forbiddance, Ann
went and reclined there,
Giving herself to memories golden which
washed out her struggle
Till of a sudden she looked at the ring en-
circling her finger,
With a quick jerk of her breath as if she were
gasping in wrestle.
That was the symbol of shadowy promise to
one who was absent
Twinned with a love unbetrothed, but impas-
sioned, for one who is present.
Duty again is flaying her heart with double
reproaches,
Secretly hoping for what she may dare not
openly pray for,
How can she banish the throb of her heart
forbidden by conscience!

So her token of love is evoking her fates to
their duel,
Still she declares to herself the word of her
promise unbroken,
Though underneath it there runs a feeling of
lorn resignation.
Up she springs from the spot which seems
to be clamping her down there,
While the sight of the ring keeps tugging her
back from her heart's push.

Two are the presences here which fiercely are clashing within her;
From their combat she flees, and yet she must take it along too.

But she dares not look back at the tree with its tussle of demons
Till she steps on the door-sill of Lady Eulalia Lovelace,
Who was already awaiting her skill in the work of the quilting.
Ann soon darted the end of a thread through the eye of her needle
And began running in mazes the tortuous lines of her stitches
Pricking the many meandering plans to the thrust of her thimble
Wreathing in graceful curves the finger and hand with the forearm,
As she sewed into harmony all of the manifold patches
Which were a variance vast in shape and in size and color.

Both were well in their work and tuned to the time of their stitches,
Lady Eulalia bettered the moments with merciful chit-chat:

"Not unlike to our life is this quilt whose shreds we are patching!
My next neighbor, the prosperous farmer, fell out with his helpmeet
Tearing to pieces the family, scattering also the children,
Rent to rags was the household, even the clothes needed mending,
When I went down to their home, and sewed all the fragments together.
Easy to darn was the dress, but to patch up the breach of the spirit,
Was a task far deeper; methinks no mortal is able
Quite to point out the spot where the shifting wound of the soul bleeds,
For the soul is the world ever-present in mind and in body.
More discolored and ragged that family seemed in its temper
Than these obstinate pieces, which have to be suited toegther
Into a concord of tints which pairs with the harmony inner,
Smoothing and soothing the struggle of life in a rainbow of solace.
Just see here in this draggled handful of shreds of all colors,
Red and yellow, blue and green—what a sport of the spectrum!

Now 'tis a bright strip, now 'tis a shaded, yet
both must be wedded.
So I am driven to picture the manifold hues
of all marriage,
Not omitting my own in the buoyant pride
of my girlhood
When I quitted for love my father's centur-
ied homestead."

Thus the Lady Eulalia made of herself the
confession,
For she too had been taught by the years
some lessons in living,
Which she imparted expecting the like in re-
turn from the maiden,
Who still kept her deep heartthrobs unsaid
in the plies of her bosom.
But once more a sweet tongue the kind lady
put into the silence:
"So the moments and moods of our days are
a crazy quilt total,
Where the cloud and the sunshine go irides-
cently dancing
Over the spaces of life, ever twinned as in-
separate partners,
Painting on Time as it rolls the shifts of the
soul's panorama,
Till in our own little self whirl the turns of
omnipotent selfhood."

Carefully balancing words thus spake to the maiden the lady,
Who had dimly forefelt already the dawn of the struggle,
Seeking to stem in advance the rush and the crush of upheaval.
Only a soulful look Ann Rutledge repaid to the speaker,
But she said not a word of the storm of the thought she was thinking,
Though the Lady Eulalia glimpsed, keen-sighted, the message
Which had been sent from within, and prompted the turn of her question:

"Tell me, dear girl, what hear you these days from the one who is absent?
When will he come and bring us the hour of happy espousals?"
Undertoned with a sigh then welled up the voice of the maiden:

"It is strange; from Abner no letter for months I have gotten,
Nor has he sent any sign, not even the print of a paper.
I have written again and again to his home in New York State,

Not a word returns, from his folks I have
begged for an answer,
All in vain—but he may be ill—or something
the matter."
Then she laid down her needle, and spake out
her thoughts more bravely:
"Aid I have sought of our Postmaster Lin-
coln, to all so obliging,
And a note of inquiry he sent to the town's
chief official,
But no response has come thence, so still in a
hope I am waiting."

Here she paused in the flow of her speech as
if thinking elsewhither,
Even she lay down her needle upon the red
spot of her quilting,
Lincoln's name seemed prompting a mood
perceptibly tenser,
While the word was picked up and skillfully
turned by the lady:
"How that youth keeps growing, perchance
no longer in stature,
Yet in the people's esteem which sees him
waxing the hero!
Candidate is he just now, but speedily will be
elected;
Yesterday heard I till here the crowd ap-
plauding the speaker,

Whom I somehow foreshadow afar as the man of the future.
I remember him first when he daringly boated the milldam;
Then you know when he went to the war, for I saw you engird him
With the sword of your ancestors, sword of the Rutledges fame-wreathed,
Which, as your father once said, again you may have to belt round him—
Words which often have caused me to roam in fantasy's fame-hall
Whirling me weirdly aback to my home by the sea-side Atlantic
Where I heard for a moment a clash—my mad premonition."

In a far-away revery was seeming the maiden to wander,
Though she took up her needle again and threaded it deftly.
Then she sewed in her trance but knew not what she was sewing,
Till she awoke at the call of the Lady Eulalia Lovelace:

"Ann, just look at what you are doing! You take the wrong pieces,

They are no longer inwrought to a pattern
around the one center,
But are flying away from each other in every
direction;
Where should have been that shadowy patch
you have put a bright red one,
Strip of shot silk, which glistens and races
in ripples of color—
Crazy my quilt will be surely with all its
fantastic caprices."

Smiling the Lady Eulalia patted the cheek
of Ann Rutledge:
"Child, methinks you are piecing the parts
of yourself in this cover,
Shreds reflecting the mood of your mind you
have sewed to a mirror,
Which is a gossipy tattler, telling some stor-
ies about you.
Come, let us rip out this last insertion, which
is not happy;
Here behold the right strip to be put in the
place of the other,
For the mad strife of hues it allays to the
calm of its presence.
Peace is the boon of the household, peace in
the act and the object,
Peace I would fain patch up in the quarrel-
some tints of my bed-quilt."

Ann took her scissors and snipped each well-
stitched seam of her sewing,
Till the piece was loosed from its place and
unthreaded completely;
But the point of the blade seemed thrust to
shearing her heart-strings,
And at each cut of the pitiless edge she felt
a slight shiver.
When the new strip she had hastily sewed in
the place of the other,
And had threaded her needle afresh for re-
newing her labor,
Scarce could she throw her first stitch—she
stopped in the whirl of the second,
Tips of her fingers and thumb refused to
close on the needle,
Arm revolted from flexing its muscles back-
ward and forward,
So oppressed she felt with her burden of in-
ner convulsion
Which upseethed to the surface out of an un-
derworld troubled.

Turning her hand she glimpsed the glistening
ring of betrothal,
Silent she gazed at the blood-grained ruby
set in the center,
Suddenly dropping her needle and thread she
sighed out her soul thus:

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"Aunt Eulalia, this is now all I can do for the quilting;
Not very sound is my body today, nor even my temper,
But tomorrow perchance I shall come when I hope to do better.
Just at present I have to go home and recover my balance,
Also my household task to fulfill in helping my mother."

Though she had given no sound of the rage of the tempest within her,
Lady Eulalia noticed a change, but left it unspoken,
Thinking it wiser to let the dark clouds fleet out of her soul-world,
Or in secret to rain down their contents relieving the heart-break.
Ann had also her happier task at home in weaving a garment;
But on this work of her loom her lips were sealed to a silence.
Lightly she tripped down the way, though throb fought throb in her bosom,
Meanwhile resolving to shun the mulberry's shadow persuasive,
Lest she might hearken too long its witching temptations to dreamland.

But behold as she passed, on the seat sat Abraham Lincoln
Under the tree with a gratified look of seeming expectance;
But Ann Rutledge, summoning all of her might of resistance,
Merely saluted "Good evening," yet with a smile of approval,
For she well knew what he came for, aye, she in secret applauded.
Then she added on going, "Home I must haste to a task there."
What that task might be she breathed not a syllable faintly,
Though the thought of it lifted each footstep in joy from the highway.

Soon she had passed by the well-sweep in front of the round red schoolhouse,
Over the public square and into the door of her father.
Slyly she slid out of sight till she came all alone to her work-room,
Where the sound of her loom gave instant relief to her struggle,
For she was weaving a garment in which seemed woven her brain-throbs,
As she played out the thread of the shuttle to shifts of the treadle.

So the pair were parted that day, though joined in their heart-beats,
Each had felt the tense stretch of the other's innermost conflict,
Each was bearing a secret within, unconfessed to the other.
Lincoln had written the letter stained with the figure of crimson,
But to deliver it then, he failed in the fetch of his courage.
Ann in her turn had in mind a new handsel she was preparing,
But about it she kept her tongue tied in the presence of Lincoln.

Thus both hid from each other in silence their mutual tokens,
Hid from each other in silence alike their mutual love-sighs,
Though their tale-telling eyes had tattled of each to the other.
Lincoln, so baffled, at first felt embittered, even rejected,
For a moment he tasted the wormwood of love disappointed;
But from his own reproaches he soon is defending the maiden
All to himself, and praising her just for her deed of refusal:

"Then she was strong—I admire her the more
—when she quit me though wishing;
Stronger than I was in this that I ought not,
I know, to have come here.
She has taught me a lesson—a living example
of duty."
Quickly he rose and started away with good
resolutions
To be dutiful also, and drive out his bosom
the love-fiend,
Who had sneaked in upon him, a demon en-
snaring his conscience;
But from this poignant attack on himself he
soon will recover,
Oneness of Love overmasters twoness of du-
bious Duty.

Happily hymned the maiden her heart to the
tune of her hand-stroke,
Love of her work with the work of her love
was merrily married
As she thought of the man for whom the new
vesture was woven,
Even she dreamed she was making a fabric to
last him a life-time,
Which he might wear in his heart unforgotten
for all of his future.

Book Sixth.

The People.

Listen again to the bell on the top of the
little red schoolhouse,
Rollicking resonant roundels over the val-
ley and woodland,
With its hemisphere musical layered above
and about it,
In the windless calm of the evening intoning
its far-away echoes,
Till they drop to a tingle that taps on the ear
of the farmer
Who in response at once sets out for the hill
of New Salem,
Where the people now gather to hear the can-
didate Lincoln,
And to vote him the lawmaker new to be sent
to Vandalia.

So he will start his career from the town and
the State to the Nation,
On the way up to the top where perches now
President Jackson.
For the humblest can mount to the highest
position in office,
Such is the quest of the world, which is
marching this road to its future.
Each bright boy of the village has heard the
prophecy splendid,
"You will get to be President, such is your
wonderful talent,"
Ever unsealing within him the sources of
high aspiration;
This prediction was bruited to Lincoln and
thousands of others.

So on the hillock was hiving the swarm of
the busy-tongued people,
Who had winged to the spot from the farthest
rim of the township,
Loving the buzz of their talk sweet-tipped
with anecdote's honey,
Waiting, however, to taste of the humor of
Lincoln's last story,
Which would make their glad diaphragms
dance in a chorus of laughter,
And would paint in bright tints all the clouds
of the turbulent welkin.

But behold of a sudden a change in the mood of the Many!
All are sorrowed to see the lachrymal look of Jack Kelso
As he shuffled among them with downcast eye penitential,
Every man in low voice was asking his neighbor: "What can be the matter?"
Still they saluted him cheerily, but how changed from his grinning!
Soberly streaked is the flood of his face for the first in a life-time!

In the foray with Black Hawk he followed the soldiers and Lincoln,
As the reciter of ballads of which his brain was the storehouse;
Chiefly of Shakespeare's lines he became the mighty intoner,
Voicing the reverberation of thunderous words from his fog-horn;
Then would Doctor Palmetto bemock him in verses of Latin
From the old classical measures sung by Vergil and Horace,
Which not a soul understood when the laugh of the crowd was the loudest.
But how otherwise now have become Jack's word and his action!

Thin in his face, demure in his look, and his figure stoops humbled!
That is Jack Kelso, not as he once was, but as he now is;
Once defiant of fate and of duty and even of conscience,
Living the life untasked, and pursuing the wayward Muses.

Merrily rose the cry of the crowd, at his presence delighted:
"Come, Jack, thunder us mightily Antony's speech over Caesar.
Swell up your voice and make it as big as the words of Will Shakespeare."
But not a line will he cite or grandly declaim as his wont was;
"Nay," he responded, reproving the crowd, "No more of his verses!
That unhallowed bard of Avon! I spurn him forever!
I permit not one of his lines to slip from my tongue-tip,
My abhorrence of what I once loved I confess with a sorrow,
Deeply repentant I feel of all of my former devotion."

Then Jack Kelso repeated with unction a verse of the Bible,
Giving a lurid recital of fiery woes of Inferno;
Also he chanted in fervor ecstatic old hymns of the backwoods.
Wonderful transformation! His favorite grog he renounced too,
Even his fiddle he broke into slivers as something Satanic,
Lest with its strains it might lead him away into paths of temptation,
Playing the music of dancers of jigs and of reels and of hornpipes.
But to hard toil he could not be broken by any conversion;
Still his love was to laze on a log in the sunshine recumbent,
Fishing away his happiest days in the Sangamon's ripples.

What was the power which wrought such a change in the sinner Jack Kelso?
Through all the cabins along the wild border and over the prairies
Had resounded a voice like the call of the trumpet from Heaven,
That of old Peter Cartright, the Methodist preacher Titanic

Preaching the gospel of peace and bidding
prepare for last Judgment.
Yet a good fighter he went with his people
against the red Indian,
Who was the Canaanite doomed from on high
to be landless and lifeless.
So in the Black Hawk war he too as a soldier
enlisted,
And he prayed as he shot at the foes of the
God-chosen people,
Heathenish red-skinned foes, usurping the
land of white Christians.

Only last month a religious revival had
stormed through New Salem,
Stirring all of the underworld's depths of
seething emotion
Which had been layered down in the soul with
the lapse of the ages.
But it was tapped by the tongue of Cartright
and burst to the surface,
Overwhelming each man in a tide from the
ocean within him,
Crushing to earth the smit sinner beneath
the words adamantine
Till he would gasp and groan and shout in
agony hellish,
For the revenge in his heart which sprang
of his life in the backwoods.

That was his sin—revenge—which he felt as
his devil and master,
Which remained in his heart long after the
Indian departed,
And transmitted the feud to the borderer
wreaking his grudges.

Aye, the preacher himself partook of the sin
of his people,
And his mighty damnation was also his secret
confession,
For he too was aware of the guilt of revenge
in his bosom.
That was the source of his power in depicting
the blazes of Hell-fire;
Torturing victims of wrath, he tortured him-
self as a victim;
There lay his worth—he would punish him-
self with the lashes of conscience,
Voicing the penalty due to the world for the
same kind of sinning.

Such was the preacher's luminous gift in
lighting Inferno
Over the prairie, along the border, in every
hamlet,
Wreaking return of the deed in the heart of
the vengeful transgressor.

All the town had been sulphured and scourged through that fiery furnace
By the revivalist just on this spot of the little red schoolhouse,
Which in his furious words would seem to be blazing in brimstone.
Women would wail, and men would moan, mid curses Satanic;
Some fell down in a fit, turned stark and chill in the body
Through the mighty downpour of the preacher's fulmined perdition;
Others more balanced, secretly vowed to be good in the future,
Not quite willing to wear their repentance in view of the public.

Even the gentle Ann Rutledge was touched with a twinge of her conscience—
Maidenly innocence deeply responsive to terror religious,
Bearing back home a cleft soul now aware of its innermost conflict,
When she had listened to Cartright's furious discourse on passion,
Which he had kindled from Jezebel's deed as told in the Scriptures.

But another still source of her soul was stirred by the preacher
Tenderly talking now: "God is Love, but Love unfulfilled here,
God is Love undying, but realized only by dying,
Love of Duty is manly, but Duty of Love is Godlike."
All this sank in the soul of young Ann, the innocent maiden,
Where the criss-cross of Life had planted already the future—
Sensitive soul to the least little prick of priestly monition.

Somehow Lincoln kept out of that flood of fervor volcanic,
Too tender-hearted to hearken the torture of saint or of sinner,
Or refusing to hate the All-hater, even the Devil.

Now Jack Kelso was one of those caught in the cyclone religious
Which oft swept the frontier and bore all in its path up to Heaven

With a mysterious might irresistible, deemed superhuman.
All his poetry was burnt out of him like a dry prairie,
Not a verse could he sing any more, the psalm song excepted,
Which he led at the church edifying to all of the people.
Even his friend, kind Lincoln, he shunned, who would plague him for verses,
Who, unregenerate still, might tempt him by funning to laughter,
Or bewitch him with charms of old fables, the lies of the Devil,
Aye, the worst sort of lies of the Father of Lies, the first Liar.

But the little red schoolhouse was witness to other excitements,
As the common hot center of all the community's passions,
Even the temperance talker could tease to intemperate anger,
For the corngod too had his temple and worshippers zealous,
Who would avenge any slanderous words blaspheming their idol.

Also the mesmeric lecturer raised by his art
a small riot,
As he in league with Satan was seen enchant-
ing his victim,
Or would read at a distance the minds of his
spell-haunted people.

Oft on the grass nearby two wrestlers would
meet in a challenge—
Thus to settle the problem, which one of the
twain was the better—
Or perchance by trial to find the best man of
the township;
Each had his friends who failed not at last
to take part in the tussle—
Hard-fisted yeomanry, ready to fight in a min-
ute the Indian,
Or if he were not present, to have a free bout
with each other.

So the village would surge far out on the
boisterous border,
Daring to vanguard the civilized world in
front of the savage,
Where the tempest is ready to rage on the
outside and inside—
With all the tumult of life sailing into the sea
of Hereafter.

But the deepest upheaval that ever had shaken New Salem,
Afterward keeping the town divided in thought and in feeling,
Roared when the bold abolitionist came and began his harangue there,
Scattering pamphlets in print and trumpeting talks from the schoolhouse,
Which assailed black slavery and favored the freedom of negroes.
Boys hissed on by Doctor Palmetto would answer with hooting,
Then they bespattered the speaker with hens' eggs, not sparing the rotten,
Till not an egg was left at the store of Abner the absent;
Still the man kept talking in spite of the smear and the odor,
Braving the threat which gave him an hour for quitting the village.

Four of the stalwart townsmen then seized the hapless offender,
Bearing him down to the Sangamon's waters and ducking him under,
Till he crawled out dripping and sat on a stone in the sunshine.
Next they piled up the perilous pamphlets and set them to blazing,

Though some sought to dissuade them and took the wet man from his captors.

One of his rescuers was the roused schoolmaster, Mentor presageful,
Who dared threaten the boisterous mob with the whirl of his ferule,
Though suspected himself of a bent to the damnable doctrine;
He foresaid in the fit of his foresight the penalty coming:
"For this deed you will yet have to give of yourselves the full payment;
Something of yours, I proclaim, will soon have to burn for this burning,
Fate you invoke on your town and the doom of retributive Furies."

Lincoln also was present and lent his arm to the rescue,
But to the crowd he spake a calm sentence, yet with a fore-cast:
"I believe in free speech, though I may not agree with the speaker;
But I shall dare foretell you the future which comes of repression:
You will yet have to listen to what this man has been saying."

Though some tongues wagged bitterly over
the action of Lincoln,
Then and afterward calling him nicknames
with Doctor Palmetto,
Who had now a new ground of dislike for the
worth of his rival,
Still the people forgave and forgot, e'en those
not approving;
History soon too remote was that deed in
rapid New Salem,
Though it had left on the village a shred of
uncanny remembrance
Which had better be buried by time in eerie
oblivion,
Than dug up for exploiting the pleasures of
retaliation.

So the citizens flocked to the place at the call
of the school-bell,
And were talking in voluble groups, not spar-
ing the village;
Even another remove to the borderland sav-
age was hinted,
Once more obeying the transmitted impulse
to turn to the sunset
Which never failed to throb in the heart of
the restless frontiersmen.

Even the well-weighing Squire made an eye
which glinted departure,
And the wainwright, though old, was faced
with a smile of approval.

But behold! what is yonder, winding around
on the highway?
Soon a slow train heaves up into town mid the
stare of the people;
Three large wagons with covers of drilling
which vaulted their contents,
Carrying household goods piled high with
women and children,
Nor was wanting the new-born babe with its
well-bosomed mother.
So they formed a full chain that linked from
the past to the future,
Over whose line was fleeting the spark of the
spirit electric,
Bearing History's soul to its new-world home
in the Northwest.

When the first wagon had come to the school-
house's tetering well-sweep,
Youthful the owner leaped down to the
ground to water his horses,
Which with many a puff had sturdily wound
up the hillside.

"Where are you going?" was asked by the throng that gathered about him;
"On to the wild Mississippi, aye, still onward across it,"
Said the youth as he thrust down the pole of the stone-balanced well-sweep,
While there pulsed in his voice the westering beat of migration.
All that crowd felt the throb and secretly wished to go with him,
As he leaped to his seat and clucked to his team to step forward,
Which then planted their hooves and straightened up stoutly the trace-chains.
Not a half dozen years had run since New Salem was founded,
Still its people are feeling today a fresh flight in their bosom.

Slowly a carriage now rolled up the knoll to the thirst-slaking waters;
Old was the driver who called in his need for help from his negro,
When to the question of Doctor Palmetto he plaintively answered:
"I unwilling have quitted my home and my blood in the coast-lands,
Where my ancestral family bloomed for six generations,

My armorial seal from England is stamped
on this carriage.
I dislike your prairies so level, they level me
also,
And I confess me not wholly in love with your
one sort of freedom.
But my young folks are dragging me onward
until I turn backward."
Yet he tickled his steeds by his lash and
trailed with the others.

Soon the third full wagon pulled up to the
bountiful well-head,
When a man climbed down by the hub of the
wheel to the horse-trough.
On his middle-aged face the years had writ-
ten their message
Which was telling a tale of the sorrow and
joy of deliverance;
To the question: "What state do you hail
from?" he answered:
"Over the mountains our journey has wound
from distant Virginia;
Loth I was, I acknowledge, to leave the loved
land of my fathers,
But I forefelt the hour of reckoning big with
misfortune,
And with my children I fled to your free
Northwest from the Judgment."

Some of his listeners dreamed what he meant,
but one, and one only,
Grasped the full sweep of his bodeful words
—'twas Abraham Lincoln,
Who with the crowd was watching the wavy
procession of wagons,
As they heaved up the road to the well, then
sank down the hillside,
Hazily vanishing out of the view in the San-
gamon valley.

But the man who looked at them longest was
Squire Ebenezer,
Who had asked them to stay in New Salem,
but none of them tarried.
Over him came the old feeling to rear a new
communal structure,
Thrice in his life he had done it, and longed
to do it the fourth time.
Silent in wonder stood gazing the people
adown from the hillock,
For they saw too themselves in these emi-
grants pushing to sunset—
What they had done in the past and still
might do in the future.

When the last wisp of the wavering wain to
a cloudlet had sunken,

All turned round to the platform of scantling
high-piled for the speaker,
Candidate Lincoln, who speedily picked up
the thought of the people;
Thus he started to form it to words deep-
hewn from his reason:

"Strange how man still keeps on his way
round the world to the westward,
Building his home, his town, his State, and
also his Nation,
That he may dwell with his kind in a house
of invisible structure
Safely, ever devote to the task of fulfilling
his freedom!
All this he bears in his brain more lasting
than chattel or cattle,
Making his weal what unites in one bond him-
self and his fellow.
Here the husbandman tills his own lot, and
is lord of it wholly,
Still he belongs to an order above him, and
has to pay taxes.
Ownership first of the soil is his motto writ
in his heart's blood
Whose red drops he often has paid to the
murderous savage;
Then he is owner in fee of himself too, and
rightly a freeman,

Able to make of the land a free world and to rule it in freedom,
And he starts of himself on his way, without king, without nobles;
Not from above, from below upwells now the fount of the Time-stream;
Self-directed the man, himself in his might his own patron,
Visible hews he his house out of wood and other material,
But an invisible tenement also he builds of his spirit,
Which he lives in with all his community jointed together;
And methinks, too, himself he is building meanwhile the new man,
Now first appearing as character writ on history's pages—
Architect thrice—of his home, of himself, of his own institution."

Lincoln now felt he had soared to the clouds out of sight of his people,
One man only excepted; at once he swoops down to the earth with an image:
"All your farms close-clustered around us are cells of the bee-hive,
Each has its own busy occupant who, while gathering honey,

Chooses the law to govern himself and chooses its maker,
Whom I desire to be, and now solicit your suffrage:
Choose ye, O children of God in this new promised land, me your Moses."

So he spake, and the strong-boned tillers of Sangamon county
Shouted assent to the flattering speech of their candidate lofty,
For they all understood when he told them in words of the Scripture,
Then he straightened himself to a plumb-line and sped his oration:

"Here we stand at the front of this Nation ever advancing,
Stand at the front of civilization itself rolling onward,
As it streams through our prairies up to the Father of Waters;
Nor can it there be detained, but to the Pacific it surges.
This little village has slid down the ages to hold us together;
Hoary its ancestry reaches in time, if we knew how to trace it.

Just in that line of wagons we saw is borne
a young harvest,
Seeds of communities free, sown over the
lands of the Northwest,
Free of too many forefathers, free of too
much tradition,
Though we lovingly look at the ancestor back
where we left him.
We have fled from our own old world along
the Atlantic,
Over the mountains down into the one Great
Valley united,
There to build the new world which puts into
order man's freedom,
If the new lawgiver may but appear in the
halls of Vandalia.
Who he is I might guess, were I not by my
modesty tongue-tied."

Here one man of them all broke into a titter
disdainful,
That was Doctor Palmetto, the finder of
faults and diseases,
Foremost troubler of all the town and its
champion critic,
Antipathetic far down in his soul to the prom-
ise of Lincoln.
Just one glance fire-barbed the speaker shot
out at the Doctor,

Then to a silence he choked down his throat
the rise of his choler,
Changing his eye and his tone, he seemed to
look into the future:

"Let me foresay the ominous word awaiting
fulfillment:
We shall have to turn round and go back to
the land whence we started,
Back to the sea-locked States which we or our
parents once quitted,
Well overworking that old world into our new
one and better.
Yon tented wagon now slowly drowsing away
in the distance
Will be wheeling about with the years to re-
turn to Virginia
Making it free, and re-bearing it into the re-
born Union,
Aye, re-building the old commonwealths once
settled from Europe,
After the type of the State first seen at the
birth of our Northwest.
Nor overlooked shall it be too—the birthdom
of Doctor Palmetto."

With an ironical twinkle infusing each line
of his features

Lincoln then turned to the people who wondered at what he was saying,
For they could not easily catch up that prospect prophetic,
He himself, when not in the glow, could scarcely repeat it.
Harder perchance he had hit, if he had not beheld James Rutledge
Who was also a native where grows the fan-leafed Palmetto—
Of the good citizens first, and he had too a beautiful daughter,
Who stood listening there on the top of the knoll with her father.
So the wordrich orator also knew how to be silent;
Deftly he turned to the theme of the time in a present example:

"Let us recall that lumbering wagon which passed here before us:
All of its parts—the wheel and its axle, the horse and the road too—
That whole outfit must soon be transformed in its speed and its power.
'Tis too weak, too slow, too costly to meet the endeavor
Born of the age and the country which has to construct a new carriage

Whirling our products and us with the wind
from ocean to ocean.
That laborious horse must be changed out of
flesh into iron,
That he may race all day and all night with-
out wilting weary,
Bonding in speed our States to a Union more
closely than ever,
Crossing the line of the North and the South
where it seems to be rifting,
On a bridge well-jointed of rails made of
metal the stoutest.
And that tireless steed would align our town
with the earth's folk
Turning extension of Space to the swiftness
of Time with his gallop."

Thus the orator voiced the deep though vague
aspiration
Of his townsmen ambitious—only the Doctor
dissented:
If for a moment he heard the far-reaching
forecast of Lincoln,
There would befall him a sudden attack of
mental dyspepsia.

Brightly uprose the next day the sun of the
Candidate's trial,

When the last ray had expired, the judges declared him elected.
But not fully unanimous counted the vote in his favor,
One torn ballot with No written over it was the exception,
Yet without any name or design inscribed on the paper;
Still the town was agreed in spelling the name of the voter.

Next a bon-fire was built to the shout of *Lincoln elected,*
Store-boxes, tar-barrels, aye, and the platform's newly-sawn scantling,
With some cordwood were heaped up and kindled to flames on the hilltop,
Which shone far down the valley with tidings of *Lincoln elected.*
All the men of the township were standing around the big bon-fire,
Which flashed ghostly reflections over the ships of white cloudland,
Or would dance its whimsical shapes on the bluff in the distance,
Merrily weaving their shadowy whorls to the music of *Lincoln elected.*

See a new hat sail into the fire—it is Squire
Ebenezer's,
Flung in mad fun by Trueblood the farmer,
whose palm-leaf soon follows,
Even the dignified beaver of grave James
Rutledge whirls whizzing
Into the blazes—the deed of rustic respect-
less Rube Ruffin;
Fast ran the jollification, every man was soon
hatless—
One excepted alone—and he was Abraham
Lincoln.
Somebody clutched at his head, but he dodged
and slid into darkness,
Saving his Postoffice hat from the general
conflagration
For the sake of its past, but also for sake of
its future,
Somehow with it he felt himself bonded in
soulship forever,
Duty it had unfulfilled—a letter not yet de-
livered.

Book Seventh.

Lincoln and Ann Rutledge.

Clouded the dawn of the morn which followed
the day of election;
Heaven above had a tear in her eye, unable
to shed it,
And the firmament golden had suddenly
turned to be leaden.
Light drooped down to the earth in a gloom
bereft of its sunshine,
While the treetops of autumn, song-rocked
in the spring, were now silent.
Even the Sangamon saucy was threading the
folds of his valley
Tuneless—unsounded on shoal and on shore
were his bantering ripples,
As he sulkily slunk through the grass to the
all-purging Ocean.

Lincoln arose and strode through the village, throbbing disquiet
Which interwove in his soul dark strands with a bright one of triumph.
He had been lifted by choice of the folk to their temple of service,
That rejoiced him as earnest prophetic of higher fulfilment;
But underneath the feeling triumphal a throb of the heart-break
Pulsed with its pain to the nethermost depths of his being;
If for a moment on victory's upspring he rose to a tiptoe,
Vengeful melancholy would smite him, bowing him earthward.
So he staggered, rising and falling in throes of a conflict
Which kept rolling in surges of storm his soul and his body,
Inner peace had fled e'en if he was outwardly victor.

Such was the struggle far deeper than any political contest,
Which now writhed inside him with fury of dragons contending.
Lincoln, the lover unpromised, loves her who is promised another,

Duty makes strife with his passion which upheaves him in heart-swells;
He is bonded in word to search for his rival now absent,
Whom he hopes never to find in spite of the quest he is making.
Writing a pitiful prayer he begs in fair phrases an answer,
Which, if it came to his call, he could cover with love's malediction.
Thus he feels himself double, and double the part he is acting,
Ever unpraying his prayer he brands himself a dissembler.
Conscience bids him renounce, but his heart keeps smothering conscience
Which stabs back in the dark till he bleeds with the poignant reproaches.

So it comes that he in response has written another epistle—
That was the unaddressed letter, yet bearing the sign of his heart's blood,
Which though hid in his bosom, refuses to be there imprisoned,
But leaps forth unexpected to light as if seeking men's eyesight,
Hinting some message unspoken which must in time be delivered.

This is the letter he secretly plans to give
to Ann Rutledge,
When the moment is born, instead of that of
the lover.

Wandering lorn and alone on the highway he
passes the mansion,
Home of the high-born dame, the Lady Eula-
lia Lovelace,
Whom he knows as the oracle giving her help-
ful responses—
Sage reconciler of all the sore troubles of
heart in the village.
Harmony's balsam she drops divinely, when-
ever consulted,
Healing the wounds of the soul from her wells
of deepest experience.
Lincoln there sighed to himself: "Ah! what
can she do in my crisis!
Dare I show her myself in this heart-stamped
letter ensanguined!"
But he could not enter the house in the clash
of his feelings,
So he sped up the road to walk off the edge
of the battle.

Soon he had strayed to the mulberry tree
which stood at the roadside,

Which had become as sacred to him as the oak of old fable,
From whose leaves as tongues the high God would whisper responses,
Giving a glimpse of the future to the inquisitive mortal.
Lincoln looked up at the foliage searing a little in autumn,
With a foreboding of fate whereof he knew not the reason.

Soon he sat down on the settle entwisted of curls of the grapevine,
Which there seemed to embrace him in many a tangle and flexure.
Then he talks to himself, for he cannot silence his conflict:
"She the loved is betrothed to another, and well do I know it!
That is the thought which knifes me in two, that knowledge! O knowledge!
Primal curse upon man at his start in the Garden of Eden!
My beginning of life it is too, with a love that is hopeless—
Yet keeps hoping anew and haling me back to my trial;
For she disdains me not in her heart, she shows me her favor.

Duty is giving her one command, but Love quite another;
Shall she be true to the hest of her heart, or true to her conscience?
For even Truth turns double and pulls her fiercely asunder.
In its full fury and uproar her struggle I mirror within me,
For it is mine—I see it as hers but I feel it as mine too—
All my heart to a demon within me is turned by her promise;
Love too, the holiest angel, is scourging me down to damnation—
What I ought is a hammer that seems to be beating my brains out.
So I have written a letter which tells her my renunciation,
But none the less is the Hope still alive that time may reward it;
Love, sweet Love I write down renounced, obeying stern Conscience,
Yet the counterstroke slips from my pen, to renounce my renouncement.
Let me read once more that script of a sybilline leaflet."

Lincoln took off his hat and gazed at the heart on the letter

Which as he held in his hand was trembling
in tune to his pulse-waves,
Letter unsigned, unaddressed, undated, per-
chance too unhappy,
As it throbbed with a pain that writhed to the
tip of his fingers,
And ran wrenching the lines of his face to the
echoes of sorrow.
When he had read the letter again and pon-
dered each sentence,
Taking the oath anew to fulfill the work of
renouncement—
From the mulberry top down fell a lone leaf
on the letter,
Twirling until its last curve on the ink-red
token alighted,
Which it seemed there to melt with in kisses
of rapturous silence.

Up he sprang from his seat and hastened
away from that leafage
Which in a thousand mirrors was holding be-
fore him his image
Borne in an overflow flooding his soul with
frenzy forebodeful.
Past the round red schoolhouse he stepped
with memory tender,
As he thought of the hours he spent with Ann
Rutledge in study,

Where their heads as well as their hearts grew joined in a marriage,
Destined to stay unfulfilled to the law, though the tie be eternal,
Which in his mind ran back to that day when he glimpsed on the hillside
First the fair maid as he sped in his flatboat over the milldam.

While he went rocking his soul in the cradle of sweet reminiscence,
Just then struck the clear bell with a tremulous note from its belfry
Thrilling the air into throbs sympathetic with tender emotions,
As it called the loitering children to school in the morning,
Who in glad groups were fain to prattle and play by the wayside.
But its vanishing thrills seemed to chime with his mood of renouncement,
Giving a toll to the beat of his heart in memory tender.

Mentor Graham, the master, was there and stood on the doorstep
Welcoming all with a swing of his ferule, the badge of his empire,

To whom Lincoln nodded salute which was
hearty and grateful,
But not mooded he was to stop at the peda-
gogue's challenge
To a roistering fable about his triumphant
election.

Anxiously onward he steps—he hardly dares
dream what is coming—
Through the Public Square, along its diagonal
cowpath,
Stopping to glance at a rifted cloud with its
downburst of sunshine,
But not failing to fling as he passed a glower-
ing eye-shot
At the store of Abner the absent which stood
on the corner,
And appeared to be woefully waiting in watch
for the owner.
Soon he stood under the sign of the well-
known inn of the village,
Which was the cheery abode of James Rut-
ledge, the dignified father,
Ever the pride of citizens, resident first of
New Salem.

Lincoln halted a breath, for he heard palpitat-
ing the music

Sprung of the shuttle and loom in the dance
of their rounded recurrence,
Weaving in cadence the web and the warp of
a garment together;
With it was mingled the low sweet note of
the voice of a maiden
Which took the beat of its time from the
measuring stroke of the cross-beam,
And interwove its melody tender with threads
of the fabric.
Well did the listener know the tune and the
soft intonation,
Which she had sung him in many a soulful
strain of a ballad.

Stepping up to the open window he looked
and he listened,
While in his bosom was smiting a loom in
heart-strokes concordant,
Weaving destiny's vesture alive with the
beats of the future.
Wistful he watches the sweep of her arm and
the swing of her body
As she forward and backward bends with the
dip of the heddle,
And keeps flinging in turn and return the
sharp-pointed shuttle,
Which adds line upon line to the garment in
steady procession;

Fleetly the bobbin is flying bird-like in the sway of the branches,
From one side to the other is streaming a thread in its mouth-piece,
As the maid catches its flight in her hand and whips it around thence
So that it leaves in its trail a filament spun of its body,
Like Arachne the spider who spins her fine gossamer network
Out of herself in long lines that cross in her intricate pattern.

Lincoln hearkened the stroke of the loom beat time to her ditty
Weaving her musical soul along with each thread of the garment;
Bowing her head to her work she seemed to be saying her prayer.
Up and down lilts the warp as if tuned to the tread of the dancer
Going and coming in mazes of texture with harmony woven,
While in the shuttle is humming the spool cut of hollowed elder.

Sadly was sighing the lay of the maid as if she were singing

Her own tragical love and the desperate
struggle within her,
Weaving her life-threads one by one, with
each cast of the shuttle,
Making a tissue that seemed to be woven of
matter and spirit.

Suddenly tapped the schoolhouse bell a toll
to her measure,
Causing her hand to miss in its grip the dart
of the shuttle,
As she called up the past of her heart on the
way to the present.

Then a moment she stopped and looked at the
ring on her finger,
For it had caught, as she jerked, in the
strands of the garment,
Seemingly seeking to stem the dexterous work
of the weaver,
Jealous of what the finger and hand were
busily making,
As they rapidly hurtled the warp and the
woof to a fabric.
Even she tried one tug to pull off the obsti-
nate token
Which still clug to its place, refusing to slip
by the knuckle.

Deeply she sighed as she sundered the thread
from the ring which had caught it,
Muttering: "Ah, methinks my shroud this
day I am weaving!"

Lincoln heard it and uttered a sob as he stood
at the window,
While the heart in his bosom hit loud on its
walls as a drum-beat,
And there rolled down his cheek in spite of
himself the hot tear-ball,
For he seemed to presage the maiden's trag-
edy coming,
And to weep at the dream of her fate which
her lips had forespoken.

But Ann Rutledge had heard in response the
low sough of his breathing,
Quickly she whirled round her head to the
source of that deep suspiration,
Catching the lines of his face at the throb of
their tristful emotion;
Well she knew the sad mood of the man and
the gloom of his nature,
Knew how to turn it aside to the fanciful play
of his humor
Putting a mask of joy on a soul overborne
with its sorrow.

Up she sprang from the stool of her loom with countenance smile-lit,
Pouring the balm of her look she tripped to the face at the window,
And with the sunshine born of a word she scattered the rain-cloud:
"Well, you peeper! So you have come to spy out my secret!
Always trying to read just what I keep in me unspoken!
Always trying to hear the unheard of my heart in its secret!
But now tell me, does not my handiwork seem to you happy?
For I was happy in doing it, weaving myself to this raiment;
You too can fabric yourself in a story—give me a sample."

Such was the shift of her sunlit soul from a cloud to a rainbow.
Instantaneous with Love's look from sympathy's well-head
Over the face of Lincoln a humorous wavelet ran trickling:
"Yes, I must be a weaver, a fable I often have woven,
Out of the Black Hawk War, on the loom of my fancy romantic,

And I see that you too have been dipped in
the spirit of fabling.
But relate to me now your secret—the nub of
your story."

Luminous, Ann responded, noting the change
in his features:
"I shall tell it at once—this garment I weave
is for you, sir,
Given by father and mother and me in your
honor's election,
To be used for a new suit of clothes when you
leave for Vandalia,
Where will begin your mount on the ladder of
lofty ambition;
How will the title resound through the world
—the Hon'rable Abraham Lincoln!"

Thus she meeded him praises, summoning all
of her sunshine
That she might gently illumine the clouds
which had lowered in Lincoln,
For she long had been ware, in the feel of her
soul, of the night-spell
Which had been laid on his life, perchance in
the womb of his mother,
And still more, had been wrought in the look
of the fate-eyed frontiersman,

Ever foreboding the danger which loomed
from the wreak of the savage.
Such was the rill of his character trickling
from fountain ancestral,
Which the maiden knew how to transform to
an overflow sunny,
Making him glow when gloomed, by a dip in
the sheen of her spirit.

Slowly to his drew nearer her eyes and
warmed to a sparkle,
Tender the whisper she lipped, and worded
in tones confidential:
"I was thinking of you with every shot of
the shuttle,
At each shift of the warp I saw a tall form
in new raiment,
Thoughts of mine own would run of them-
selves into lines of the texture,
And this loom has woven you too with the
yarn of the spinner.
But behold! at the image within me I looked
through the window,
When the face of my fancy shot into the face
here before me
With a sudden fulfilment of hope which baf-
fles me dreaming."
Then she lit up her look with radiance fresh
of her soulshine.

Buoyantly swayed on her smiles rose Lincoln
out of his sorrow
Layered within him far down in the bottom-
less sea of his being;
Yet she too had her sorrow, surging in con-
flict ferocious,
Hers was a running fight underneath her
pleasant exterior
Waged between her unpromised love and her
unloved promise;
Chained to the loveless law is the lawless love
in each heart-throb,
Which at the presence of Lincoln smote her
more fiercely than ever.

But the youth was illumined with new light
that streamed through his features,
And he spake forth his radiant mood in an
eager inquiry:
"What do you say you are weaving? Tell
me concerning this garment—
Suit of fine clothes bran-new you people are
going to give me!
Strangely forefelt! it is just what I needed
and secretly longed for.
Such a providence takes off the scowl of high
Heaven down at me."

To him responded the maid sympathetic in
voice and in eye-glance:
"All of us thought the new dress you must
have to bespeak the new calling,
For your career now takes its first stride to
the goal of the future,
Passing from little New Salem on up to the
State, to the Nation,
Oft have I seen in my dream your steps to
the top of the mountain;
Our whole household has shared in the joy
of weaving this garment.
'Tis a month since I started, forecasting that
you would be chosen—
See! it is done—but two threads more are all
that are needed,
Those I shall add just now while you look at
me throwing the shuttle."

Then she sprang to her seat and played on
her loom a sweet music,
Only two notes of the strain whose measures
had built the whole fabric,
While each thread of the texture was woven
along with a heart-beat.
"Finished!" she cried in a joy, to a bolt she
wound up her labor,
Talking meanwhile to the wonder-smit coun-
tenance peeking before her:

"This is what we are going to send to the village's tailor,
To the crosslegged Sandy, skillfully plying his needle,
Shearing and stitching and pressing his flat-iron hot on his lapboard."

Then she turned and faced intently the youth at the window,
Drawing her look to a question which seemed to wish "no" for an answer:
"Have you brought me today the letter a long time expected?"
Ere he could utter a word, his hat she had daintily lifted—
Luckless rent-free Postoffice hat, which she knew as his mail-bag—
When down flitted that unaddressed letter of Fate with its token,
To the surprise of the maid, as Lincoln spake out the presage:
"There it drops out again! The secret can never be hidden!
Thrice it has sped to the sight, defying my every precaution,
And has revealed the full heart to the eye in symbol of red-ink.
By myself I dared not give it, but Heaven now helps me.

Take it, 'tis written to you, but not by your absentee Abner."
Ann for a moment was startled, feeling the cut of her conflict,
As the youth let fall on her palm the weird-working token,
Saying: "You need not answer it till I return from Vandalia,
And expect not a line till you see me appearing in person;
To renounce is my word which I solemnly lip in my vow here."

But soon Lincoln unkeyed to his love the tense turn of his features,
And with the look of a hope he preluded his purpose more gently:
"I shall write once a week to the Lady Eulalia Lovelace
Who is the friend of us both, and also deft mender of heart-break;
Till then renounce, and with you so pledged I shall have to renounce too.
You were strong when you passed by the mulberry shunning my presence,
Just as strong I am trying to be and fulfill your example,
Then the days will bring the reward of our double renouncement."

So he spake, and would give up the present
in hope of the future.

But just look at the blush of the maiden as
she clings to the letter
With a deep sudden sough of her breath,
which was pulsed with her heart-beats
Throwing out on the air the shock of her in-
nermost conflict!
Then she pressed to her quivering lips that
symbol of red-ink,
Quite as if she might dare, in the fire of her
feeling, to kiss it.
Lincoln leaned forward, perchance to bestead
the sweet lot of that letter,
But he saw on her raised-up hand the red
wrath of the ruby
Flashing out like a blood-shot eye from the
ring of betrothal;
At the implacable image of anger he shudder-
ing shrank back,
Dropping his visage to earth in the glance of
the flame-eyed demon.

There they stood heart-struck apart, the ring
was a Hell-fire between them,
Silent they stared as it were on the brink of
the chasm infernal,

When down dropped on their hideous dream
the voice of the school-bell,
Calling them back to themselves for fulfilling
the work of renouncement.
Each turned away from the other in spite of
their mutual longing,
Hopefully waiting for time to resolve the lorn
strife of their love-sighs;
Still they both peeped backward, each looked
at the other while looking.

Book Eighth.

Vandalia.

Now behold on the road to the Capital Abraham Lincoln,
Leaving New Salem behind, afoot he is threading the country
Whose expanse is rolling beyond and beyond in the distance,
Carrying upward and onward his ken into dreams of the future,
Till in the welkin above him he sees the high dome of the Nation
Bending around the horizon which drops sunlit to the prairie,
And encircles each step with a heaven of far-glancing glory,
Even the threatening cloud-wrack would flash into fleeces of gold-wool.

Oft he inspects the new suit of which he is
wearer triumphant,
Smoothing it over the nap with his hand
caressingly gentle,
Watchfully picking away from its surface
each gossamer stranded,
Each wrecked cobweb idly afloat in the sea
of the sunbeams,
For his happiest hope was to keep the gar-
ment still flawless
Till he returned from his trip in the bloom of
the Spring to New Salem,
Love was secretly wound in each thread, love-
spun and love-woven.
Loftily in his new vesture he trod a new man
down the highway,
Newly aware of himself, beginning anew his
career too;
Even a strut now and then he would stride, in
ambition exalted.

Still he kept turning around for a glance at
the village receding
Till it swooned out of view in the arms of the
wooing horizon,
When it left him alone to himself in a fare-
well of silence.
Hark! it still has a tremulous voice, though
vanished from vision!

'Tis the bell of the schoolhouse breathing the lisp of its tinkle
In its low breath which throbs on his ear for a moment, then dies there,
Quite unable to pulse a beat farther across the mid air-sea,
Bearing a message of love which startles his soul's reminiscence,
As he dreams that he hears the last sigh of a maid in the whisper
Faintingly to him syllabled from the invisible belfry,
For the dark backstroke of Fate smote in him amid all his joyance,
Just from the depths of his love overflowed him the forecast of losing.

Autumn has ripened the round of the seasons to fullness of fruitage,
Shimmering into the sun-beshone hours a sense of fulfilment.
Still the yellowing year hath a yearning for something beyond it,
Even the day in decline doth whisper a longing immortal,
And the set of one sun is felt as the rise of another.
Time itself this moment must die to re-live the next moment.

Lincoln was sauntering slowly along in the mood of the autumn
Which was playing its tints on his soul like the vanishing rainbow,
When he was suddenly met at the crossing by one of his voters,
Best of the neighboring farmers, who then started to quiz him:
"So our lawmaker lofty is off for the halls of Vandalia,
Which lies dreamily muddy along the low banks of Kaskaskia,
Weening itself already the Capital true of the Nation.
But, good Abraham, fetch me at once that railroad of iron
With its horse to skip fleetly across my lob-lolly prairie,
That I may give up my oxcart and quit so much walking.
I would like if it ran just in front of the door of my cabin;
Anyhow keep it away, for my vote, from the farm of Jake Jaggers."

Such was the name of a neighbor and rival he spitefully spat out.
Artfully Lincoln switched off to a story in giving his answer:

"Let me now tell you what I am thinking about on this journey:
That whole Capital I am propounding to scoop at an armful,
And to carry it off to the banks of the Sangamon river,
Where it rightly belongs if we list to the voice of our county;
Yea, my New Salem would never refuse the gift of the State-house."

On sped the speaker leaving his voter to ponder the problem.
Often he shifted around in his mind his law-giving burden,
Thinking how he might knit the whole State in the knot of new union,
Tieing it through and through with the iron-bound tracks of the railroad,
Bringing more closely together its people in commerce and travel.
Also he peered in the rift which ran through the heart of the Nation,
Which made of one two peoples that started to facing each other,
Still united, but quaked with uncanny foreboding of struggle,
Which already was stamped on his soul presaging the future.

Aye that pedestrian silently faring ahead on the highway,
Saw around the horizon the far heat-lightning in flashes,
Which, unvoiced of the thunder, seemed deedless caresses of fancy;
Or at night the star-shot welkin would fling him a fire-ball
Suddenly over the sky, illuming the firmament's arches,
Torching terrestrial ways for a minute, then blaze into nothing.

But the strife which moiled in his mind most often and deeply,
Came of the Furies of Love which kept wrenching his heart as two wrestlers
In their desperate combat, dragon-like, twisted together.
Love's deepest truth in his being becomes what assails the Law's sanction,
Yet he the Lawmaker is for others, aye for himself too.
What he owns in every droplet of blood of his body
Cannot be his by the right of the world but belongs to another;
What in nature is one and the whole, stays halved and asunder.

Think what may happen while he is away
in the distant Vandalia!
Winged by Chance the letter expected may
drop any moment;
Then sad Ann would behold as the signs
of her innermost combat
Two contending writs, each making the claim
of possession.
Or the absenter himself might appear and
take up his promise!
Thus the lone wayfarer tossed on the waves
of his soul in a tempest,
Seeking to fathom the oracles dark of the
deeds that are coming.

Now at a farm-house facing the roadside he
asks for his dinner;
Which the generous owner, guest-loving,
heartily offers.
Lincoln had soon, from his place on the porch,
peered in at a window
Whence he had heard the sound of a loom in
weaving a garment;
Where on a stool sat the daughter busily ply-
ing her shuttle,
With the same bend of the head, and graceful
cast of the forearm,
Which he had seen once before when he
peeped at the beautiful weaver,

While she wove with body and soul the garment he wore now.
Even the look seemed the same recalling in rapture her image;
As he stood in a silence steadily eyeing the window,
He was waked from his dream by a call to partake of the viands,
Which he did with a relish, oft adding the sauce of a story.

Finished with luck the good dinner, thriftily spoke up the farmer:
"Acres of corn are now ripe awaiting the cut of the corn-hook,
Frost has bitten it gently, today we are starting to shock it;
How all the ears of the stalks have suddenly shifted their color,
From their suits of fresh velvety green to a butternut fading!
And the red tassels so silken and soft that waved in the sunshine
Like a fiery bandanna hung out from its pocket of corn-shucks,
Are burnt crumbling and crisp to the touch, and sere to the eye-sight;
Also some ears, the best of the crop, we shall strip for a hoe-cake,

For the roasting-ear's kernel now hardens upon the last nubbin."
When he heard of the husking-bee Lincoln rejoiced as a victor,
For as lawmaker knew he far less of his craft than as husker,
Though another sly motive he had which he hid in his bosom.
So he asked of the farmer to take him along to the cornfield,
Modestly saying this word of himself: "I think I can help you."

All then jollily started away to the trial of labor;
Lincoln first shucked off his coat and his vest from himself like a corn-ear,
Carefully folding and laying these garments bran-new on a fence-rail;
But the new trousers he could not so easily save from the ordeal.
Then he took the curved cutter and slashed away at a corn-hill—
Four large stalks it contained overarching him under their leaf-blades;
Each of the stalks bore two ears of corn and perchance a wee nubbin,
But he severed them all at one cut of the keen crescent corn-hook,

Gripping their tops and thrusting them into
the shock by the handful.
Then he clasped on his long middle finger the
thong of tough leather
Which would fasten the husking peg cut of a
hickory sapling
Tapering down to a point to pierce the
rough husk of the corn-ear,
Till the serried lines of gold grains would
flash in the sunlight
Massed in phalanxes close round the cob in
the shape of a spindle.

So the ears kept flying to heaps from the
hands of the huskers,
Till the supper-horn blew its sweet welcoming
note from the farm-house
Making a music softly attuned to the glow of
the sunset,
Hurrying hungry huskers to frugal fare of
the farmer,
Mush and milk as the vanguard, then hominy
hulled and the bacon,
Crowned with a fry of young chicken that
swam in a sea of cream gravy.

Ended the meal well-seasoned with humorous
bits of the backwoods,

Lincoln addressed the daughter and begged
for a tune on her fiddle,
Namely the loom with its bow and its strings
strung tense to be played on,
Tapping the harmonies held in his heart by
the mode of its music,
Thrilling the halls of memory's temple with
images happy
Which restore the whole world of New Sa-
lem's beautiful weaver
Re-enacting the glint of her eyes and the lisp
of her lips too.
This was the reason why Lincoln had stayed
and swinked in the cornfield.
Fain would he witness in life once more his
heart's fondest drama
Played by the daughter before him attuning
the loom and the shuttle.

So he re-lived in that farm-house the sweet-
est scene of existence
For awhile, when a rap was heard and a
tread on the doorstep;
Bidden by guestship to enter, a stranger
walked in out the night-tide,
As the good farmer held up the candle but
uttered no question,
Then the newcomer spoke: "I am trudging
my way to Vandalia,

Chosen lawgiver for the whole State from
Montgomery County,
Dimmed by the dark and weary of footstep I
ask a night's lodgment."
Hesitating the farmer replied as if forced
to refusal:
"Here we have but one bed for a guest, and
that is now taken."
Lincoln then broke in suddenly: "We can
lie under one cover;
Friend, I too am bound for Vandalia, going
to-morrow,
Tall representative cornstalk grown in the
Sangamon Valley.
Possibly we shall agree on some law as we
talk in our slumber,
And I would like to be winning a vote for my
railroad beforehand."
"Yes, but mine is a heavier burden than
that," said the stranger.

Both lay down underneath one bed-quilt, the
best of the household—
Only last week it was merrily stitched at a
neighborhood quilting—
Both of the lawgivers soon were in mutual
harmony snoring,
Worn with the work of the day they enter the
portal of dreamland

Where is still living their past, oft mingling
with shapes of the future.

One of the sleepers heard lisped a faint word
from a voice of his dreamfolk:
"Soon I shall be but a ghost, yet to stay in
thy presence forever."

With that voice still haunting his ears rose
Lincoln at daybreak,
Strolled about on the porch, then looked at
the loom through the window.
Soon the wife of the farmer, forethoughtful,
had ready their breakfast,
To whose homely fare was added the fry of
some hen's eggs,
Nor did she fail to give them a slice of her
ham from the smoke-house—
Delicate beechnut ham, the best of the flesh
of the porker.
Both of the guests partook, and paid their re-
spects to the hostess,
Who well knew how to serve her food with a
flavor domestic.
Briskly together they started to step off the
way to Vandalia,
Law-making seat of the State, which hovered
a day in the distance.

First the companion spoke up to Lincoln who lagged absent-minded:
"Twice already a member, I now am going the third time—
Here in my knapsack are well-thumbed pages of print you should know of:
Jefferson's manual showing the order which guides our Assembly;
Two Constitutions, of State and of Nation, I always keep by me,
They are the rock on which the true patriot has to stay anchored."

With a knock of surprise was Lincoln jerked out of his dream-world,
For the man now spoke like a sage of experience and learning,
As he pulled off his coon-skin cap with tails ornamented,
And unbuttoned to freedom of speech his checkered shirt-collar.
Then the philosopher clad in the style of the backwoods, gave answer
Why he had quit the civilized world to dwell on the border:
"I was born in Virginia, near-by stood famed Monticello,
Known as Jefferson's temple, sacred to all his disciples,

One of whom I was in youth, and today I do not deny him.
But a good dozen years have sped since I fled from my birthland,
Feeling a doom suspended above it and destined to light there.
So I began with thousands of others the toilsome migration
To this spacious North-West, by Jefferson dowered with freedom.
Yet I fear lest we may in this State have trouble to keep it."

Quickly a look sympathetic shot out of the eye-balls of Lincoln,
As the man uttered his heart in words that fell saddened by forecast.
Meantime they stopped at the cross-roads reading a sign-board,
When on one of the centering ways came rolling a carriage;
In it was seated a gentleman dignified, lofty in presence
Like a cavalier cloaked and hatted, and somewhat ringleted also;
High on the seat in front was perched the bred darkey as driver.
Stately the man in the carriage nodded to Lincoln's companion

Whom he well knew, for both had been makers of law at Vandalia.
Aristocratic he glanced at the footmen, and rather disdainful,
He too wore a new suit, but cut to the fashion of Richmond.

When he had whirled in his vehicle by them, began the companion:
"That is the man who tried and yet tries to make us a Slave-State,
But we thwarted him—still we may have to meet him this session—
Honest I hold him, he never would sell out his honor for money,
Though for what I then did, he shows me a grudge in his bearing;
Did you not notice it? Yet he too was born in Virginia,
Not many miles from the shrine Monticello, the center of Statesmen,
Also he claims to uphold the true Jeffersonian doctrine.
But I came from the opposite side of the same Monticello."

In a pause of reflection, Lincoln then picked up the discourse:

"Also my fathers were born of that State and its character twofold:
Oft I have wondered at the two doctrines which sprang from her mind-world,
Opposites quite; and she bore two sets of political children—
These new States of the West, all born of Mother Virginia,
For example our Illinois here, and yonder Kentucky—"
But the philosopher whirling, broke in with gesture emphatic:
"Friend, Virginia is halved, deep-cleft with a line of division
Down in her soul—her land even seems to me now to lie double;
Parent of States half black half white, half slave but half free too,
List what is doomful, half union her faith yet half separation.
And her great men are dual inside, though much do I love them;
That is the birthmark of Fate which they show in their doing and thinking.
Not alone on the man is it stamped, but on State and Nation."

The philosopher took up his gait, slow-stepping, reflective:

"Truly methinks I now see my exemplar, my Jefferson also
Is composed of two opposite strains inter-woven, colliding,
Yet the people are such too, and that is our destiny's riddle."

Peripatetic the sage revealed himself still in his life-lines
As he gave with a sigh the last turn to his heart-felt reflection:
"Once we had hoped to break every fetter within our Dominion,
But the Compromise passed and we quit the old home for new freedom,
As did thousands and thousands, and still they are coming by thousands
On all the roads that branch to the prairies and woods of the North-West.
Jefferson's domain I call it, the seat of a new liberation—
Yonder already they come"—as he spoke, he triumphantly pointed
To a white serpentine train many-jointed of round-covered wagons
Winding about through the limitless level of grassy prairie.

But see the Capital lying along the sluggish
Kaskaskia,
Sunning itself on the mud-made banks in a
hundred log cabins
Of the frontiersmen, all of them ready to
wing away westward,
Over the roiled Mississippi and over the
snaggy Missouri,
And still farther ahead to the threatening
spurs of the Rockies
Flying above the others and lighting adown
on the front line,
Like the swirl of a covey of blackbirds round-
ing the grainfield,
Whirling over the ground in turn upon turn
as a roller,
For the last will be first when the first has
been left as the last one.

Even the Capital seemed to be ready to quit
its foundation,
As if eager to rise on the wing and take pass-
age elsewhither,
Quite uncertain of stay in the dowerless town
of Vandalia
Which now Lincoln beheld, with a tale on his
tongue as he entered;
This, however, he told not, finding just then
not a hearer,

Grave legislators were coming each hour, well-shotted with speeches.
Many a member had borne on his shoulder the long-barreled rifle
Ready to shoot the fleet deer by the way or the crested wild turkey,
Loving the sport of the hunter and furnishing meat for his journey.
Others came riding on horseback well-steeded and booted and stirruped,
Men of cavalier names and manners gemming the backwoods;
One legislator still rattled his buckskin breeches with fringes;
Still another would strut in his grandfather's old regimentals.

Whose is that round and rubicund face all smiling unbristled?
Lincoln looks at it well as if watching the time in a mirror,
Which is imaging to him his opposite, outer and inner;
That is Douglas, hardly of age, and not long in the North-West,
Son of distant Yankeeland, here quite alone in his birthdom.
Both of them heirs of the future now casting the lots for their inning.

Such are the antitypes twain yet inseparate, yoked both together,
Suns revolving about each other within the one system,
Each repellent of each, yet both held fast by attraction
Stronger than they were or knew of—that universal attraction
Which unites the great cosmos without us and also within us—
Each fulfilling the other when seen in the cycle of ages.

Soon the session began and Lincoln listlessly listened,
For his heart he had left behind in a home of New Salem,
Little remained him for making the law in Vandalia law-making,
While on his winter of soul lay chilly the winter of nature.
But with the roll of the season the hour arrived for his speaking,
Somehow often deferred until the last day of the session,
When he began to run through the State his ubiquitous railroad.
Chiefly his theme was the iron-bound bond of the Union now rifting;

Newly remarried, the North and the South
would stay one forever.
Two were the loves which seemed interwound
in the turn of each sentence,
For the love of his country would fuse with
the love of his maiden.
At his highest he painted the North and the
South in a picture
Kissing, yea hugging each other by means of
his amorous railroad,
Till he dwelt more on the union of love than
on love of the union.
All his images glowed with the fire of a pas-
sionate longing
Lit in two souls now parted but living a
dream-life together;
All his fancies seemed to burst up from a
flame underlying,
Even cold facts were heated white-hot in the
forge of his feelings.

Self-forgetful he was, he soon forgot his dear
railroad,
Also out of his memory lapsed for a moment
his country,
Just the one fierce love had seemingly
swallowed the other,
As he spoke of a scene, forecasting the place
and the action;

Thus at his argument's topmost pitch in his fervor he cried out:
"Here at the mulberry tree now let us be plighted forever."
Lincoln had heard his own words, which startled him dumb at their meaning,
For they had secretly tapped the underworld dread of his being,
So that the hope most hid in his heart had bubbled up sunward.
Meanwhile arose with a shout from the members unanimous laughter:
"Where is that tree—we wish to be there at the tick of the moment."
But instead of the speaker who hushed, another responded:
"Who is the girl?—Now tell us the story, and we'll vote for your measure,
That I am sure will be the best argument yet for your railroad."
Snappishly old Sam Wildfly, sarcastic retorter from Wabash
Rose to a point of order adjusting his spectacles brass-rimmed:
"Not before this House is the subject brought up by the speaker,
From the railroad wandering off to the kiss of his sweetheart;
'Tis not debatable under the rules of Jefferson's Manual."

Such was the humorous punch which raised
up the head-drooping Lincoln,
And which started his tongue word-smit, to
funning an answer:
"Friends, the gavel I seize and rule myself
out of order,
For our departure the hour has struck—I ad-
journ myself to next session—
When I shall finish my speech, and tell you
the end of my story."

Book Ninth.

The Letters.

Drearier lounge the wintering days on the hill of New Salem,
Older the hours have seemed to be growing since Lincoln's departure,
And the village though young in its years turns gray with the season,
Aged already within while silvered in snow of December.
Hark! the hoarse crows which are dolefully cawing around the bleak skyline!
Almost bare are the boughs of the sycamore hung with its plume-balls,
Which keep swinging in dance to the boisterous tune of the storm-wind,
Till they are whirled from their sport and drop to the earth in the springtime.

Icy and shrunk the rivulet crawls through
Sangamon Valley,
Listlessly laving old logs that are lodged in
the slime of its streambed,
While the sere grass on its banks droops
over to house the shy rabbit.

People at home would hug the hot hearth in
moody seclusion,
Or at the store would cock up their feet on
the stove in a circle,
Rating the times for their troubles, not spar-
ing the lag of the village,
Often shying a rock at the law and the lax
legislation.
Every minute ticked off a complaint and
blamed every other,
And all daylight from morning till evening
seemed only sunset,
Even old Time lagged weary of scything the
universe wicked.

But the stream of discussion would lash into
foam at the highest
When two speakers would clinch and begin
a political wrestle,
Deftly unsheathing their keen-edged tongues
for a stab or a story.

Best of these fencers were Squire Ebenezer
and Doctor Palmetto
When they both waxed wroth on the theme
of President Jackson
Till the wordsmen seemed ready to turn on
the spot into swordsmen.
Still they did not, for after one sally of hot
effervescence,
Evenly Squire Ebenezer would balance the
scales of his temper,
Cooling down from his boil to big bubbles
of good-natured humor.

Lincoln had failed not to send a letter each
week from Vandalia,
Where he was passing the winter in exile
unhappy yet hopeful—
Letter well-spelt, well-written of hand, well-
turned in its phrases,
Over each word of his pen he would linger a
moment in longing,
For he well knew who would hear it and
feel out its meaning most deeply,
Though it be sent to the name of the Lady
Eulalia Lovelace
Who would open it first and peruse all the
words in it written,
Words on the surface subdued to the calm
of an inner renouncement.

Still he would utter the wish of his heart
to get back to New Salem,
Giving various reasons, all good, but never
the best one,
Which he would cunningly hide between lines
as they flowed in his missive.
Often the word had one sense for the Lady
and one for the maiden;
But at times broke forth in despite the gen-
uine outburst;
"Tell me," he asks in a letter, "which of
them is the more binding
Be it Love's troth or Love's truth, or be it
the form or the essence?"
Then again he would lip a few sounds of the
strife of his bosom:
"Lawmaker sworn of the State I am seem-
ing my days at Vandalia,
Lawbreaker down in my heart I oft catch
me in plans of my action."

Such were the sayings which he would weave
in the ink of his pen-lines
Scarce understood by the reader, the Lady
Eulalia Lovelace;
But spring-clear to Ann Rutledge who silent-
ly saw to their bottom,
For they told her own to herself, reflecting
her image,

Thus confessing himself he spoke her deepest confession.
Lastly he utters the man in the words of a balanced decision:
"Though unpledged, I shall ever be faithful —not faithless with pledges;
Loyal still, though renouncing loyalty's fairest fruition."
Reading this passage one day, the Lady rose asking the question:
"What does it mean? Do you know?" but the maiden held sighless her breath-tip,
Leaving unworded the throbs in her bosom assailing each other,
Till she went home to herself and lulled them in tasks of the household.

Nun-like in look she eases her heart of its struggle by labor,
Even the loom she plies not so much through need of the fabric
As for the sake of its soul-tuning gift of sweet reminiscence
Softly retelling her thoughts as she wove the garment of Lincoln,
And recalling the bliss which arose with the play of the shuttle,
When he appeared at the window just in the midst of her dream-world.

Nor forgot she the flutter of doom in the fall
of the letter
Which still next to her heart she wore with
its symbol of crimson.
So in her feeling would rise the combat ever-
recurrent,
Raging between sweet Love in itself and stern
Love as a duty.
Often she looked at her image within as a
person divided—
Self unleal has given away the Self that is
leal;
What is her fate where her heart and her
hand are fighting each other?

In the stress of her spirit she draws from her
bosom its treasure,
And has started to grope for the secret sense
of the message,
Long she stares in a far-away trance at the
blood-tinted symbol,
Even she picks up her pen to send a request
to Vandalia,
When a fresh letter is brought and laid on
the table before her
Just alongside of the red-hearted missive of
Lincoln it fell down.
Strangely withheld she her hand from put-
ting a word on the paper.

Well she knew the turn of the script and the
sort of envelope,
Knew who had written her name on its back,
and the penmanship's flourish;
Oft she had seen it before in times gone by
though not lately.
Blow unexpected! though long expected! the
letter has come now!
Letter of absentee Abner announcing his
speedy arrival,
Wreathing skillfully many excuses for ab-
sence and silence.
But he soon will return to make good by mar-
riage his promise,
And a festival hold for herself and for all of
New Salem.

Stronger than ever she felt the daggered
strife in her bosom
Cutting both ways till divided she swooned
in her chair for a moment;
Then she rallied and rose to her feet in the
strength of her passion
While the two letters she seized as if grap-
pling the source of her conflict;
With teeth clenched she flung both of them
down on the table together,
Where they stood on their edges and leaned
each to each in a combat,

Till they slowly fell over, the heart-blazoned
one on top of the other,
Hiding quite the address though wreathed in
fanciful pen-strokes.
Ann had tokened with bodeful delight the
prognostication,
Though in triumph she suddenly glowed,
she drooped soon defeated,
And began to wrench in the struggle more
deeply than ever
Which now stood in her eye-glance, while
also it raged in her bosom.
Thus to herself she dialogued there her fu-
rious soul-strife:
"Sacred promise on one side, sacred love
on the other,
I between them am lodged, yea within them,
and they too within me
Where they rend me in twain while ruth-
lessly rending each other.
Not alone do I view, but I am, their desper-
ate duel."

From the table she picked up the letters and
held in each hand one:
In the left she caressingly stroked with her
fingers the heart's sign,
In the right she crumpled her name writ on
the envelope

Crushing all of its well-rounded flourishes
into cross wrinkles and creases
And at the top of her frenzy she called to
the fighters inside her:
"Which is it? Shall now perish my heart
or perish my pledges?
Is Love ruler of Law, or is it the Law which
is ruler?"
Both of the letters fell down on the table
from fingers unnerving,
Then with a sigh she smoothed out the folds
of the script she had crumpled,
And re-read her own name on the back of
the furrowed envelope.
Soon the letters she picked up and held both
together thus saying:
"Oh this strife I cannot endure, nor can I
resolve it,
On these covers of paper are wrestling the
very inscriptions,
Red against dark, the heart against words
of my name writ in order
Outwardly trimmed with many a curled-up
crinkle and frizzle.
Off again I must haste to the rare reconciler
of trouble."

Quickly she reaches the mansion of Lady Eu-
lalia Lovelace

Who so often had stayed the tossed soul in sympathy hopeful,
On whose palm are laid the two letters with problems embattled,
When she responded what seemed to accord with the wish of the asker:
"Absentee lovers must forfeit the claim which they have neglected;
And the promise, if not fulfilled in its time, is unpromised.
Thou hast waited the limit, renouncing thy tenderest selfhood;
Thy new freedom of choice thou hast won, just by thy renouncement."

So the oracle spake, oracular still her responses;
But the wound lay deeper, far deeper than she had suspected.
For Ann glanced at the ring and appeared to shrink back from the outlook,
Feeling the might of her word once given to thrill on her heart-strings.
Then the Lady Eulalia uttered boldly the mandate:
"Take off that sign of betrothal which now encircles thy finger,
Let me have it to give to the right one whom I shall discover,

Or to return to the owner when thine no longer it can be."
Tearfully tense Ann Rutledge replied to the words of the Lady,
"That I have often attempted already, but never it slips off,
Hand may wrestle with hand, but the one cannot conquer the other;
Then if it come off, that is no stop of the struggle within me,
Firmer this ring has been put on my soul than here on my finger."

Up from her seat the maiden had sprung in the thrust of her sentence,
When old Betsey the negress appeared and brought in a letter,
Aye a new letter making the third of that company written,
Which had just come by the mail addressed to the mansion's mistress,
In a hand-writing well known to the watchful eye of Ann Rutledge,
Who had caught at a glance the dip of the lines on the missive.
Soon the Lady had broken the seal and read the short message,
Which she reported: "Lincoln is now on his way to New Salem,

More than a week is gone since the session
adjourned at Vandalia;
He is making a roundabout journey to visit
his parents,
Chiefly his step-mother, who in his boyhood
mothered his soul's hope.
Let me count up the time—he may come
down the road any minute."

Ann sank back to her seat at the word medi-
tatively silent,
For there began in the depths of her heart
a new kind of encounter:
As she thought the two lovers might meet in
that mansion together.
Abner was coming, Lincoln was coming, per-
chance the next minute;
Both had announced by letter the news of
their future intention.
Soon she upgathered herself and nervously
clutched her two letters,
One hand took hold of the heart-sign, the
other was twirling the word-sign
With the tips of her fingers, as she bemoaned
her contention:
"Higher, still higher is rising the struggle
within and without me!
Where can I turn now for help, or even a
hope of allayment—

Not to the world which flings me from all
to the den of my demons,
Not to myself, who am but the battle ground
for my own feelings
Which to the death have grappled to throt-
tle each other and me too."

Lady Eulalia looked at the speaker with
sympathy hopeless,
Quite tongue-tied in her doubt as to what
she could do in the crisis,
For the case lay beyond all her power of
sage ministration.
It was the first time she ever had known the
defeat of her wisdom,
And she could not help thinking her hour had
struck for departure
Back to the home of her earliest love in her
vaunted Virginia.
Also Ann Rutledge had felt the fresh impo-
tence of her adviser,
As she uttered in sighs her word of re-
newed resignation:
"This is a criss-cross far stronger than I
am, even than we are;
Mightier is the high hand which is dealing
this dole to my life's course.
When I came hither I bore in my soul two
sides of a combat,

And I bore in my hand two strifes in the inkstains of writing;
Both of the messages warring flew down from above on my table,
For a spell I gazed at their conflict, e'en tried to compose it,
But it had gone already beyond my power of self-help—
That fierce duel between the two scripts of Abner and Lincoln.
So I ran out of the house and hastened my pace to your mansion,
Seeking my peace from the sweet benediction which flows from your presence."

Brightlier gleamed in her eyes the Lady Eulalia Lovelace
When she glimpsed but a glance of herself in solacing sorrow,
For she would live the beatitude born of the peace-maker blessed.
But the maiden then paled and gave a new turn to her problem:
"Only behold this wheel of my destiny whirl a fresh struggle!
Not the two letters alone engage now in furious combat,
Rising up like contestants before the thick throngs of my fancy

And then clinching, line around line, for the deadly encounter,
But the two writers themselves appear in personal presence;
Strangely transmuted to life from the ink of their very hand-writing,
Forth they step in array from behind the dark strokes of their pen-points
Into the place of their meeting which is my soul as the witness,
Yea as the battle itself too, and I am the victor and vanquished:
God! perchance in this duel I am the slain and the slayer."

In a surge of foreboding she quitted the house of her helper,
Who no longer could help in the deluge of down-pouring trials,
Feeling the world to be fated around her and changed to a demon
That was dogging her soul with remorse fulfilling a judgment
Which had been burnt in her brain by the tongue-flame of Cartright the preacher.
Even the sunshine shone doom on the mansion, the schoolhouse, the village,
As she looked back on her path, or forward away in the landscape.

But the letters she kept, for she could not
part from their presence,
Just one glance at them both would give
some relief to her soul's fray,
As it turned her from Furies inside to the
symbols outside her.
Still the one letter she bore in her bosom
where it lay hidden,
While the other she twisted in twirls of her
fugitive fingers;
So the heart and the hand kept asunder in
space and in spirit.

Lonely and lorn she wandered about the
streets of the village
To herself unknown in what she was dream-
ily doing,
Till at last she had come to the mulberry
tree and its settle,
Drawn to memory's shrine by the instinct of
happier moments.
But on her joy soon smote the dread back-
stroke of sorrow remorseful
Till she dragged from her bosom to view the
red-symboled letter,
Tearing it nearly atwain through the heart
that reddened upon it,
When she besaw it a moment as by a shred it
was hanging;

Then with a seeming relief which bespoke it dearer than ever,
Gently she put it again in its place just next to her heart-throbs.

Spring, the young lover, was kissing in warmth the hill and the valley,
Trees had responded with outburst of buds and of leaves and of flowers
While the prairie had flung out in rapture its flowing green garment,
In whose folds it now draped its bare white body of winter.
Also the mulberry's branches had answered the vernal caresses,
Robed in foliage new which bended down over the settle,
To embrace it in love and to hide it from prying outsiders,
Waving above it the treetop's coronal studded with flowers,
One of which hung close down to the hand of Ann Rutledge who plucked it,
As she drew from her bosom the letter and gazed at the red-heart,
Which in spite of the rent kept clinging in hope still together.
But the other envelope was whisked to the earth in her motion,

Whose inscription she saw, when she heard
its command to be picked up.
Meantime she thought of the man who had
woven this intricate settle
Out of the tortuous twigs of the tree and
the sinewy grapevines
For a purpose she knew of indeed, as she
often had used it—
Aye, was using it now in the fanciful work
of her day-dreams.
Still she foreboded that to it remained some
higher fulfilment,
As the trysting-place final of love for him
and for her too.

Why in her face are the flashes now fitfully
chasing each other?
Ah, she is glancing again at the ring ingrown
on her finger,
Circling also her soul, the fatal ring of be-
trothal,
Which rounds fiercely in one ear the promise
with hiss of a demon,
But in the other breathes softly the unprom-
ised love, like an angel;
Even by one wrench more she tests it, but
vain is the effort.

Then she holds up before her and ponders that heart of renouncement
Which sheds comfort anew with a hope of some happy deliverance,
Though it hangs on a shred, by a Fury cleft through in the middle.
Out of her revery lofty she woke at the call of the bluebird
Which on a twig just over her head is swinging and singing
Merrily for its winged mate who flies to its home in the branches,
Where are performed to the music of breezes the happy espousals
Which she looks up at in joy, then she beams her lit eye-glances earthward.

Down the road in the distance she sees a tall figure approaching;
Well she remembered the words of Lady Eulalia Lovelace
While perusing a letter in forecast of somebody coming;
Still that shape appeared to be strolling up out of her dream-world
Limned into life there before her largening eyes: who is it?

Book Tenth.

Back from Capital.

"Swim, if you dare, in a race with me over this turbulent river,
To yon hill-top of green, the highest above the mad surges."

Lincoln shot out the words at a rounded and orotund talker,
Douglas, whom he would test by a dare to a trial of action,
Who stood merrily babbling, the center of home-going members,
Young, but already well-versed in the art of winning men's friendship,
Skillful to draw the attention, and clever in cunning devices.

"Pick up your gauntlet at once I shall, and now I am ready."
Then he began on the spot before all to strip for the struggle,
Seizing the start to tickle the lungs of the pioneer hardy,
Who delighted to cheer on the contest and watch the contestants.

Such was the trial of strength, the first one of many to follow,
Testing the Age's advancing protagonists, Lincoln and Douglas,
Who had already selected each other, unconsciously choosing.
Each of them faced to the opposite side in political measures,
Counterparts seemed they in stature and spirit, yet bound up together.
Often they met and passed with a nod in the course of the session,
But underneath ever feeling the grapple of destinies inner,
Which now utterance found, ere they parted, in shape of a challenge,
Friendly indeed, yet presaging perchance the cast of the future.
Strange, but the eyeshot of each would pierce to the soul of the other,

Though not a word in jest or in earnest be spoken by either.
Lincoln, when he had come to his fireside, thus often reflected:
"Truly, of all of the men I have seen in the test of this session,
That young fellow belongs to the future, tried by my touch-stone.
So do I also—both of us, twinned to a mutual struggle—
Spirit wrestles with spirit in a spectral multitude's presence;
I can feel this genius of mine in a coil with his genius,
If I but pass him alone on the street, each silently stepping.
So I shall test futurity's wink by this innocent wager,
Whether perchance the oracle dark may hint me a presage."

Both of them daringly plunged in the surges of swollen Kaskaskia,
Far overflowing its banks by the copious showers of springtime,
Whirling along in its wrath much soil, some trees and a cabin,
Animals wild and tame could be seen in a strife with the torrent;

Once a corpse came bobbing along in the roll
of the wavelets,
Ghastly warning to youths ambitious of
swimming the deluge.

Douglas scudded more quickly the scum of
the boiling Kaskaskia,
Splashing his strokes in the stream till he
reached a helpful green islet,
Where overworn by the task he lay down on
the bed of its herbage.
Lincoln more slowly kept whirling long arms
in circles successive,
Till he passed the green islet without ever
stopping to rest there,
And was nearing the goal when Douglas
again wooed the waters.
But too late—the stout swimmer could be
overtaken no longer,
Who soon strode up the hill the highest
above the wild current.

Generous Douglas was first to salute his ri-
val as victor,
While the crowd on the shore responded with
cheers to the triumph;
And then rapidly homeward scattered to put
in their corn-crops,

Not to meet till next winter again in law-making Vandalia—
Dozens of Spartan Lycurguses sprung of the Western prairie.

Now behold on the road from the Capital, Abraham Lincoln
By a roundabout route returning in hope to New Salem,
Out of the tumult concentered from all of the State to a whirlpool,
Out of the conflict of soul which raged within him by absence.
Glad he is to be free of the struggle of parties for power,
Glad to be rid for a while of the troubles that loomed in the Nation.

Still he bears deep strife, the deepest of all in his life-time:
He the maker of Law, doth feel himself too its unmaker,
As he appeals the keen suit of his Love to his own Legislature.
Thus of two Law-giving bodies strangely he finds himself member,
Issuing opposite mandates, both valid, an outer and inner.

Lover and lawgiver coupled he is, each fighting the other,
Making the law and breaking the law he joins in one person.
So he quits the mad scene, at odds with himself and the place too,
Often preluding alone on his path this note of his discord:
"Strifeful State-House, next time I shall carry thee off elsewhither,
Even shall bear thee away to my home in the Sangamon Valley."

So he already had spoken his mind to Vandalia's dwellers
Whose one creed was antipathy to all Capital-movers—
They who would steal the beautiful bride of Kaskaskia's kisses,
Making her marry that dwarf of a Sangamon shrunken,
Which was scarcely able to float a respectable flat-boat,
While their own dear nymph of a stream seemed an Amazon mighty.

Still the lore which Lincoln had won was learnt for a life-time,

Every part of the State he had seen in its men at Vandalia,
Leaders selected they were from its South, and its North, and its Middle,
Well representing the flood of its people now forward now backward,
Hinting the interflow subtle of currents of western migration,
As they came rolling along from the old Thirteen to the New-State,
Knitting together and knotting in thousands of communal nodules
At the crossing of roads, or perchance at the ferry of rivers,
Round the new sawmill or gristmill driven by fall of the water,
Round the strong man as center, whose soul was the soul of the village.

Heroes big and little were these, heroic world-builders,
Prairial demi-gods, Hercules modernized, but yet unstoried,
Draining the swamps, and slaying wild beasts, and subduing wild Nature,
So they laid everywhere the foundations of civilized order.

Such were the men whose choicest by Lincoln were seen at Vandalia,
Now the lawgivers chosen for the whole State by their people.
Often he heard them discussing together the overcast problem:
Which is first in authority's right: the State or the Nation,
Some upholding the one as supreme, but others the other.
Often he thought: "Just that is the question which has to be settled
In the future—not by the word, but the deed—oh! Heaven!"

Well he recalled the same problem debated by two young Lieutenants
In the Black Hawk War, officers both of the National Army,
Robert Anderson one of them, Jefferson Davis the other;
Each stood ready to battle on opposite sides of the conflict.
That debate had stayed in his mind with destiny's imprint,
For the strife had seemed to take place within him on both sides,
Yet at the end the vision rose up of himself as the healer.

So the political drift underlying the rush of the session
Often transmuted its sound in his soul to a music uncanny
Like the clashing of steel and once like the roar of a cannon,
Dark presentiment's underflow bursting its way up to sunlight.

Thus was trudging along the new road the lawmaker Lincoln,
Leisurely tuning his steps to the gait of his slow meditations,
Which came echoing back to him out of Vandalia's winter
With its manifold conflicts in Memory's billows resurging,
As they rolled quivering through him in shapes of his feverish fancy,
Images loving of Love, and of State, and also of Nation,
While around them would rise unbidden the presence of Douglas,
Now his counterpart fated to march with him forth to the future,
Like a high pair of cosmical suns in hot revolution,
Till all ablaze in its death the one drops into the other.

Suddenly near the roadside he heard the strokes of a chopper
Who was felling in thirls of his axe the oak of the forest.
Bit by bit he had cut the bole of the tree to its center
On one side, and had wearily started to chip at the other,
When the tall stranger steps up to him begging a turn at the axe-helve.
To the proposal the woodman consented, deep-breathing his "Yes, sir."

Lincoln then started his labor, which was a flight from his feelings;
Out of his inner world suddenly seemed he to speed to his outer,
Work had called him away from himself in the clash of his conflict,
Given him happy release by turning his thought into action;
Walking up to the tree, he had walked from one life to another.

Deftly he clenched his keen weapon and whirled it around in great circles,
Cutting a mouth in the oak which spat out its chips all about him,

Till its heart had been slit, and its head many-branched began drooping,
When it started to crash in its fall through the neighboring tree-tops,
Rending the limbs in its path as it fell to the earth like a giant
Shaking the forest around and afar with a grand detonation.

Lincoln then spake to the man who admired the swirl of his arm's swing:
"Now you are breathed, so bring on your saw with its set-teeth
If you wish me to help you cut up this bole into saw-logs
Fit to be sawn into boards or split by the wedge into fence-rails."
Gladly the man brought thither the sharp-toothed saw and two-handled,
Soon it had bitten the bole into logs of the length of the fence-rail,
Which they readily rolled apart by the help of the hand-spike,
When kind Lincoln offered once more the good of his service,
Likewise seeking to drive off the merciless gnaw of the glum-glums:

"Yonder I see the maul and the wedge for
cleaving this oak-log,
Let me put them to work that I splinter it
into fine fence-rails.
I am come from the Capital where I was law-
making member,
But at home I now feel, engaged in this pres-
ent vocation;
Happier far as a rail-splitter than as a law-
giver am I."

Then with a joy on his face he knuckled the
hickory handle,
And kept whizzing around in great spirals
the oak-knotted maul-head,
Fetching it down with a thud on the top of
the ironwood wedges,
Till the tough-grained log he had riven to
right-fashioned fence-rails,
Not too big nor too little for keeping the
swine from the cornfield.

Ended the task with a story, the woodman
spake up astonished:
"Stranger, how comes it that work you seem
to regard as a pastime?"
In slow words of reflection the railsplitter
mauled him the answer:

"Humble the deed may be, and still of its
kind can be perfect;
Excellence would I attain in my life, though
but a wee sparkle;
All perfection is Godlike, it need be just a
scintilla.
So it results that in making a rail I find
greater pleasure
Than in making a law when I know not how
I can make it.
Let me the excellent be, though only the ex-
cellent hogherd."

Lincoln then nodded a farewell, still his so-
liloquy voicing:
"But the railsplitter perfect must rise to the
lawmaker perfect.
Over my limit to mount is the excellence all-
excelling.
That is the test which awaits me next time at
law-making Vandalia."

From the stare of the man the speaker then
fled through the brushwood,
Leaving his burden behind as he skipped out
into the open;
Light was the heart now of Lincoln as fleetly
he sped on the roadway;

Mauling the bole with his brawn, he had
mauled from his brain all his troubles,
Freed of the inner corrosion which sprang
from the clash of his conflicts.

Now all at once he beholds in himself the de-
lights of the spring-time,
Which is outwardly rollicking over the wold
and the woodland,
Tuning the earth and the sky to the mood of
its laugh universal.
Oft he would stop and hark to the chorus
of thousands of blackbirds,
Who were chanting their ecstacy for the re-
turn of the season,
In the shaggy high sycamore hugging and
shading the brookside,
Out of whose branches were pouring the
showers of melody sky-born.

On the root of a tree, where the rivulet
drowsily rippled,
Lincoln sat down by the wayside, listing the
choir of the warblers,
Who might sing him to sleep in a roundel
attuned to the waters.

Soon he had dreamed himself stepping the road in sight of New Salem;
There he saw too the mansion of Lady Eulalia Lovelace,
Thinking how always his missives to her were meant for another,
For the maiden who treasured the fire-red sign of renouncement.
But he passed onward, dreaming to hie to the heart of the village,
Where he would greet good William the wainwright and Squire Ebenezer,
Then to the crowd assembled about him would tell a new story.
But mid his revery rustled the branches above him in whispers,
So that he trod in his fantasy under the mulberry's blossoms,
Where he sat down on the settle so cunningly woven of grapevines,
Visioning there a shape to be present and waiting to meet him.

Suddenly neard he adream the echoing strokes of the school-bell
Which by its bodeful vibration shook him out of his ghost-world,
So that he leaped from his seat and uttered a word disappointed:

"No, not yet, not yet, though such be my hope of fulfilment;
First I must go to my mother before I can ever be happy.
Step-mother though she be, more compelling than blood is our kinship.
Though she bore not my body at birth, she mothered my genius,
Having a seeress's glance which can look in the glass of the future."
This he would hear from her lips just after his earliest inning,
Spoken in love from the deepest communion of spirits united,
For she could draw up a sybilline word from sources eternal.

So the traveler trudges his way with the landscape conversing,
Which would silently tell him its tale, reflecting his humor
In the play of the color spread over the meadow and hillside,
In the laugh of the buds as they burst to the fullness of flowers,
In the joy of the sunshine fleeting with fleeces of cloudland
Which run racing in golden processions around the blue welkin.

Once he turned to the field as he heard the words of the plowman
Who would talk to his team in a language well known to the horses
While they turned up the soil for planting the crop of the future.
Lincoln himself would grapple the plow by the curve of the handle,
Cluck his command to the quadrupeds lazily lagging,
Till they had drawn round the field the plowshare's quadrangular furrows,
Which were soon to be combed into shape by the currying harrow,
When would be dropped and covered the grains of the corn in the hillock,
Four of them rightly, according to transmitted wont of the farmer.

Next on his journey he came to the huts decayed of the Indian,
Wreckage of what was once a well-filled aboriginal village,
Pitiful remnants left of the red race now going to pieces,
Which recalled to his memory scenes in the war against Black Hawk.
Sympathy welled from his heart at the tragedy of a whole people,

Who seemed wilting to death at sight of the
poisonous White-face—
Peeple whose skins were fate-dyed into their
coppery color,
Able no longer to stem the furious tide of
migration
Which already had swept them far over the
broad Mississippi.

Look! here rolls a fresh rill of the westerly
current of people,
Through this Indian village which seems
but a piece of old driftwood
Stranded along the river, and soon to van-
ish forever,
Sinking beneath the high overflow's flood of
the emigrant wagons
Which are now bearing the tenants to dwell
in the land of the future:
These, by the traveler met, are moving in
every direction,
Plodding along through the mud of the
prairie with ox-team or draught-horse,
Or perchance encamped for the night by a
spring or a runnel,
Where a fire is lit in the brushwood for
cooking the supper.
Deep ran that stream of the folk who were
quitting the country where settled,

And instinctively sweeping in shoals to the
borderland's front-line
As if they mightily wrought for a continent's
quick transformation,
Turning it to the abode of civilized life from
the savage.

Lincoln had likewise driven his yoke of la-
borious oxen,
When with his people he came in his youth
to the Sangamon country.
Thus he beheld a part of himself in this
search for the sunset,
Still he could feel in his soul the prick of
the lust of migration;
Such an experience was his, and that of his
ancestors also,
Who had ever vanguarded their race in its
march to the westward.

Now his journey has led to the door of his
father's log cabin,
Primitive home of the frontier, standing
alone on the prairie,
Prairie called Little Goose-Neck, by some
fanciful humor.
There on the sill stood the mother who had
sprung up from her spinning—

But the step-mother was she, the merciful, Sally Bush Lincoln—
That she might welcome the son of her soul though not of her body.

Lincoln lovingly tarried e'en in his haste to return home,
Whither another true love was wooingly winging him onward,
And the good mother presaged it, bespeaking her sibylline spirit:
"So your career has begun its first stride in its mounting up starward.
Well did I know it, forecasting your bent by the deeds of your boyhood,
As you lay on the floor in the light of the hickory firewood
Conning the print of your book till the hour of midnight was over.
This is but the beginning and many a step you will take yet,
But along with the steps as you rise smite the backstrokes of sorrow;
Son of my spirit, now march to your destiny's goal as a victor,
But I forefeel it—your life will be full of high triumphs woe-laden."

So she was reading his soul and its stress
with a sibyl's precision,
When in her mood she oracled new the grim
fates of existence:
"Let me confess—on myself I see lettered
your lot in its outline;
I have known the sweet hap and the mishap
of love and of marriage.
Mine is in small what yours is in large, oh!
Fate, in the largest!
I peruse on my own soul what you are to be
in the future,
Only magnified thousands of times is the
luminous print there,
When I behold you here standing before me
within this cribbed cabin;
Still the tragedy greater is yours, my heart's
son—I see it!"

There aside she had turned to fling down a
tear on the hearth-stone,
Lincoln was startled, and yet sympathetic
far down he responded,
For he too had felt out the end in the gloom
of his being;
But the mother came back with a thought she
had left still unspoken:
"I can see that you wish to hurry away to
New Salem;

Well do I know the little live loadstone drawing you thither.
Abe, the girl that you love I saw when she shone out the best one—
For I marked all of her turns as she gave you the sword of her fathers
When you went to the war intending to battle with Black Hawk;
Young and beautiful, aye too beautiful ever to last long,
And I could trace in each dart of her tremulous eye the heart's struggle,
Which had begun to look out underneath the fair lines of her features.
I shall remember her as a bright soul on her way up to Heaven,
Yet her lot is like yours, and mine not unlike I can see it,
But foremoulded to yours by love is her destiny's outcome—
Love that is deeper than mine, and grown of a different soul-seed,
Love that passes from Life through Death for its fiery trial.
O blest boy, I hear it foredoomed me that I shall survive thee!"

Down drooped his head upon hers in response to the might of her presage.

So they parted in mutual love the future
forefeeling.
Lincoln went out to the field to visit awhile
with his father,
Whom he assisted to hoe to a finish a patch
of potatoes,
Giving him also some dollars out of the law-
giver's stipend.
Then they bade to each other goodbye, with
kind wishes of welfare,
For the son and the father could hold no in-
ner communion,
Child of the flesh refusing all kinship with
child of the spirit,
Who was mothered by step-mother, but was
step-fathered by father.

Down the road turned Lincoln, thinking on
all that had happened,
Chiefly revolving the prairial seeress's vati-
cination,
For it tuned with his own far down in his
being unconscious.
Slowly the afternoon sank into night with
the lowering sunset
Whither the young man seemed to himself to
be journeying forthright,
Inward and outward into the vale of the
shadow eternal,

Till the pedestrian weary lay down to his
dreams on a hay-stack.

When he awoke the sunrise was laughing
straight into his darkness;
Soon with temper renewed by a cheerful
meal at a farm house
Lightly he trod on the road as it wound with
the leaf-shaded brooklet,
Now in his mood's attunement he heark-
ened the soul of the season.

All the earth was a hope outbursting in
green of the spring-tide;
Songsters in every bush were choiring their
festival's music,
Over the prairie was verdantly spreading the
velvety ocean
Through whose level of waves the deer would
fleet in the distance,
Oft the wild-fowl would suddenly whirr
overhead and then drop down
Into the tangle of brushwood whence would
spring out the squirrel;
Even the cloud was clad in its gold-lace and
fringes of Heaven,
While with Spring the glad hills were fes-
tooned for Love's holiday happy.

Inside the high-domed mansion of welkin and prairie encircled
Lincoln was wending his way uphearted with happiness lofty,
Vibrating through and through to the thrill of Nature's caresses,
Feeling the heart of himself responsive to beats of the world's heart.

Every step was an image until he had reached the headwaters
Where he heard the first infantile prattle of Sangamon's streamlet—
His dear Sangamon, hurrying onward to come to New Salem—
Like himself in its longing which he could feel in each bubble
Restlessly rushing to kiss the fresh face of the village's hillside.
Lincoln kept pace with the passionate stream in light-lifted footsteps,
Feeling companionship intimate which was conversing unworded
Through all the tortuous twists and whimsical whirls of the water.
He would lie down on the sedge of the brook in a well-shaded dingle,
Where he would list to himself and the ripples in secret communion.

Hark! a new sound! there is wafted a musical wavelet of tinkles!
Faintly they flit on his ear, as light as the fall of a snowflake,
Weaving their notes with the mood of the Sangamon's murmurs in concord.
There! once more that wafture of tones! oh list! 'tis the school-bell
Into whose outermost circle of sound thrilling echoes concentric
Lincoln has entered with heart strings tuned to the wavelets sonorous.

See, he comes to a knoll, from whose height he descries a proud mansion
Nestling its roof within the umbrageous embrace of the tree-tops,
Where is the high-pillared home of the Lady Eulalia Lovelace.
There he thought of stopping a moment to greet the high hostess,
Who had loyally answered the letters he sent from Vandalia,
But he sees some distance ahead the mulberry shade-tree
With all its branches outleaved and blooming in flowery splendor.
That whole tree seems to titter in love which tingles his bosom,

And he steps more exalted along on the boards of the side-walk
As he approaches the shrine of many a hallowed meeting.
Soon he takes a fresh step round the turn of a fence by the roadside
When there dawns on his eye-glance searching the seat of the grapevines
Made by himself in a moment presageful of hope's sweet fulfilment—
What can it be? 'Tis something that moves—a dress and a bonnet!
Decking the form of a woman half hid in the leaves of the branches!
Look! she has risen and seems to give a salute in the distance,
First recognizing the stalwart figure and then too the garment
Woven in love on the loom by her hand and her heart as her handsel;
While he comes up, she steps to the front from the leafage—who is it?

Book Eleventh.

Under the Mulberry.

"When the leaves of this treetop peeped fluttering into my eyesight,
You I held in my heart and hoped for the bloom of your presence."
Lincoln had stepped from the roadway while these words he was saying,
Till he stood underneath the silk-green mulberry's leafage
Which with the flowers paired was whirling in dance to the breezes.

Airily rising and taking her place in front of the comer,
Spake through blushes the maid, as she glanced up into his features:

"And I too, when I first came hither today
and lounged on this settle,
More than an hour ago, I seemed to grow
into the earth here
Dreaming that you would soon be espied on
the road from Vandalia."
"And I too was dreaming of you on this set-
tle reclining
When my love-born imagery slips into being
before me;
Softly there starts to sing me a note far
sweeter than music."

"Also my fancy was watching you walk in
your cloudland of fancy,
When you stepped right out of the ghost-
world into my presence,
As I dreamed you dreaming my dream of
happiness future."
"Also my fancy saw yours and the shapes
which it joyously played with,
For they were mine and seemed in their love
to know one another.
Tell me, are we a phantom, or even a phan-
tom of phantoms?"

So they had come together again at the shrine
of their trysting,

After a long separation of space but not of the spirit.
Even though here in the body, they could not come out of their dreamland
Where they had happily lived, to each other in freedom united,
Far from the conflict of life which had hounded them both like a Fury.
Lincoln in hope looked out of himself for a view of kind nature,
If she would deign him perchance a breath of her loving suggestion:
"Watch this mulberry tree with its rollicking leaflets and flowers!
Oft underneath these branches we twain have attuned our best moments,
What does it say to us now foretelling the cast of our fortune?"

Fairily lifted the maiden her hand and plucked a bright blossom
Pinning it on the lapel of his coat whose threads she had woven,
Saying with eyebeams outpoured: "It smiles you a bright benediction."
Lincoln again for relief fled into the joys of the season:
"Not alone this mulbĕrry blooms in a vernal carousal,

But the fields and the woods have shot up heavenward striving.
Look! the earth and the welkin sink down in each other's embraces
All around the horizon which hides them behind its blue curtain.
Birds are singing and mating and making their nests for the future,
Herds are mad with the season and frolic the day through the meadow,
Bees are buzzing high-hearted amid the flowering tree-tops,
I can hear them at work now, humming of hives and of honey."

Here the word waited awhile in the lull of his sympathy's silence,
While the youth and the maiden were sunk in the throb of the spring's spell;
But soon Lincoln was striking the keynote of Heaven outside him,
And inside him as well, the outer preluding the inner:
"Mark too the azure eye that is tenderly rounded above us!
Now it is hiding its blue with a white woolly flock of a cloudlet,
Passionate longing it looks, but modestly keeps in the distance."

Then the coy maiden drew closer and daringly whispered the answer:
"See the bold bright face of the sun while he pours out his glances
On the earth all his bride, and tells her the gold of his treasures."
Both of them drooped down together into the seat of the grapevines,
Wide enough seat for the one, yet narrow for two, still both sat down,
Quite as one person the twain seemed bent to the sides of each other,
While the mulberry's flowers hung downward and smiled at the lovers
Just like themselves now blooming their hour at height of the season,
Half concealed in their glory behind the tapestry leafy.

Thus they sat in their bower alone and felt their new freedom,
Silent they gazed on each other, but silence was fuller than speeches
Till it burst overflowing to words from the heart of Ann Rutledge:
"Long I have secretly hoped, I confess, for the turn of this moment,
Aye, ever since I beheld the brave youth take his boat through the milldam."

Lincoln replied: "I saw the fair form that
stood on the hillside
Waving her handkerchief thrice and again—
I could go to the spot now—
Oft I have gone there and looked at myself
in the years intervening,
With a hope in my heart—a hope but not a
fulfillment—
Deeply I longed for it, still I never expected
this moment."
"Then on that day," fell slowly the words
of the maid to a falter,
"Then on that day when I girded thee round
with the sword of my fathers,
Thee, young Captain, that moment I dreamed
thee my hero forever."

So in their soul's own spring-time they sat
with ecstasy thrilling,
When the maiden uplifted her hand to stroke
a caress on his forearm,
Or to pick off a gossamer caught in the nap
of his garment—
Of a sudden the face of the youth grew dark
as the cloud-wrack,
Even the sigh burst up from the far-down
source of his being,
As he rolled round his eye and glanced at the
ring on her finger

Whose red ruby seemed flashing a curse whenever he saw it.
Wincing with memory's pitiless pain he worded his sorrow:
"But the counterstroke felled me when I returned from my absence,
For I found the dear prize had meanwhile been won by my rival."
Ann heaved a sob which rose from her soul like the roll of the tide-wave,
E'en a low shriek she voiced with her breath in the stress of her struggle,
As she jerked back her finger encircled with pledge of betrothal.
Then she grappled that ring of her fate and she wrenched it:
"Off, off, and out of my sight! I ban thee not to be mine more!"
So she reproached it: "Thou sign of despair at my happiest moment!"
But it fought her and stayed, though she bloodied the knob of her knuckle
In her fierce writhing to loose from its clench that symbol of promise.
Soon she stopped and wilted in look to sad resignation
Quite unable to put from her hand or her heaven the token:
"Fain I would now be quit of it, but it never will leave me."

Sorrowful, Lincoln was soothing the rage of
the maidenly battle,
When she fell on his bosom and coupled her
own to his heart-beat,
Till they both were transfused to one soul
that could never be parted.
Thus they lay in the lull of their Paradise,
when the youth whispered:
"He, the absentee, Abner, will never come
back by my presage;
You have not yet received the reply I un-
willingly wrote for?"
With a short jet of a scream upwhirling from
life's last fountain,
Forth she drew from her pocket the writ
which she crushed in a crackle
Till her well-flourished name on the paper
was furrowed to creases:
"Yes, here it is," and she broke, as if march-
ing to death, the envelope:
"He is soon to return—perchance he is now
in New Salem."

Terror shook the brave man when he saw all
his world fall in ruins;
Hope, the newborn star of his life, dropped
dead like a cinder;
Agony wrung every limb in his frame with
the rage of a demon;

But suppress it he must, so he spoke out calmly resigning:
"Heaven be witness! eternal must be our renunciation!"
So he appeals as if facing just there all the fates of existence.

But at the shock of the word Ann seizes the doom-bringing letter,
And she tears it to pieces again and again in her frenzy,
Flinging the ominous fragments away from herself by the handful,
Seeming to spurn in disdain each inked little shred of the missive.
But just see! the papery flock flung out on the breezes!
One wee whirl of the eddying wind is whisking the fragments
Back to the seat and e'en to the hand of the maid which had whirled them,
And they besprinkle with speckles the garment of Abraham Lincoln
Which for him she had woven before he went down to Vandalia.
Aye, they even dared fly in his face with the twirl of the whirlwind,
One of them lights in his eye, to blind him the way of the future.

Up he springs and shakes off the bits of impertinent paper
Which had defiantly come in the way of his highest fulfillment,
While through his face are fixed tense lines of his determination,
Though around them the tenderest looks of his love throb trembling.
Dares he meet the new crisis? Let destiny vengefully smite him—
Taking his seat he clasps the maid to his bosom in transport;
Boldly he spares not the kiss, the kiss of eternal betrothal,
Which she gives back to him twice and thrice in fiery rapture,
While she whispers a word from her heart for acceptance of Heaven,
Mid her tear-drops falling and sighs upstorming she prays there:
"Thou Almighty, oh! tell me, can this be my second betrothal?"

Then she fell, as if severed within by her promises double.
Lincoln calmed himself for the sake of calming the maiden,
Bade her look up to partake of the joy of the mulberry blossoms

Which all day were blooming their love to the world and its lovers,
Every branch was waving above them the leaves of a garland,
Backward and forward attuned to the harp of the low-piping breezes,
With which whistled the robin his note now and then from the tree-top,
While the sparrows would twitter their speeches and beak one another,
Also debating of Love as they sat in their parliament feathered.
Mid such music he breathed in the ear of the maiden a whisper:
"Now Love's truth and Love's troth are joined in a union forever,
While the hope of the heart grows one with the tongue and its promise,
And the holiest wish to the word runs counter no longer."

Scarcely had sounded the tones of Lincoln's happy concordance,
When she lifted her palm to place it in his for the blessing—
What is this sudden convulsion! witness the act of Ann Rutledge,
As she holds up one hand to his gaze and the finger ring on it

Whose dumb look he well understands in its
sinister meaning,
Which now quakes each joint of his body in
shudders repeated.
Then the maiden begins to wrench off that
sign of her promise
More ferocious than ever before against its
refusal;
But it clings fast with mortal embrace in her
flesh, in her soul too,
Dumbly affirming its place by the right of
the primal betrothal.
But at a twist the red-teared ruby leaps out
of its socket
Sailing unseen far off in the grass or per-
chance in the bushes.
"Let it go," she spake with decision, "no
longer I wish it,
All that heart has shot out my ring and out
of myself too,
Let this sign on my finger now stay as it is
—heartless."

List! to the shock of her word comes tolling
the sound of the school-bell,
Bringing to both of the lovers the eventide's
message unwelcome,
For the afternoon hours already had slid off
unheeded.

Lincoln sprang up in a shiver hearing the
bodeful vibrations,
Saying: "Now I must part, there is tonight
a discussion—
That's the first call of the bell—I hurried to-
day to be present."

Still he lingered and sat down again with the
maid on the settle,
Who recalled the memories sweet of the lit-
tle red schoolhouse,
When their heads and their hearts first en-
twined in the rapture of study.
But once more interrupted their talk that
echoing belfry
As they lurked half-hid in the gauze of the
leaves of their bower,
Bidding them part and follow away in the
wake of the sound-waves.
"Well-aday! now I am off," leaped Lincoln
from under the leafage,
Tenderly breathing a sigh, ere he sped, on
the lips of Ann Rutledge,
Though he marked the agony tearing her face
as he left her.

Then alone, as was best, he turned down the
road to the village,

Soon he had dodged out of sight, though glancing furtively backward,
Darting afar a sunburst of love, which again made her happy.

Now by herself the maiden slipped off to the home of her parents,
Lightly uplifted in tread at the start and exultant of spirit.
But on her way she saw the white storehouse of Abner the absent,
Read his name on the sign-board lettered in front of the building,
Then came the back-stroke again with the pitiless might of her conflict,
Whelming her more than ever down into the den of the Furies
As she reflected: "My doom is fallen, I feel it redoubled,
Mark it rise upward! two letters, two lovers, and now two betrothals!
How the scythe of old Time keeps halving me deeper and deeper!"
Soon she had crossed the doorsill, and silently entered her chamber,
Throwing herself on her bed, she drew forth the red-hearted letter,
And at its glance rose murmuring words from her nethermost fountain

As she prayerful seemed to address an invisible presence:
"Soon I shall take thy letter along to my bridal hereafter
When I shall come before God on His throne with my love everlasting,
And beseech Him in mercy divinely to seal my espousals.
Though of earth be the law of my word, I shall not disobey it,
Rather now let me be crushed by the weight of its honest fulfillment,
Only beyond I go free of the chain of my primal betrothal.
I shall hold up this letter of thine in the presence of Heaven,
Hold it up with the hand here gyved by this ring on my finger,
I shall show it as pledge of fidelity's oath to my conscience,
Yet too as sign of my love triumphant for thee in all struggle.
There on high a new ring will be given me, ring of betrothal
Which I shall wear at the Judgment of Man, as the sign of salvation."

So the maiden lay glooming her forecast in dim premonition,

When half adream she seemed to be hearing
the voice of the preacher
Weirdly attuning the air to the words of a
musical whisper:
"God is deathless Love, whose fulfillment is
only in Heaven."

Soothingly Ann's whole soul had slid out
of time to a vision,
Which repeated that sentence again and
again with her heart-throbs
Till in her flight she suddenly winged to the
Presence Eternal,
Who as Last Judge had called her before his
final tribunal.
There he gazed at her soul with its love in
infinite pity,
Crowning her true as a bride with the lumi-
nous garland of Heaven,
He as High-Priest supreme of the Universe
gave her in marriage
Stamping the love of God Himself on the
love of the maiden;
Thus transfigured to truth immortal was
truth of the mortal.

In the night Ann Rutledge was waked from
her sleep by the moon's touch,
Whose fine fingers of radiance reached forth
lifting her eyelids,
Gently leading her back once more to her life
on this earth-ball;
But she was ill, and she woke up weak from
her dream-world,
For a fever had wrapped in its blaze her face
and her body
And was burning her strength when to rise
from her bed she attempted.
Dropping back on her pillow, she called for
help from her mother,
Who soon came with the father and stood on
watch at the bed-side.

Book Twelfth.

The Double Debate.

Twilight of eve is flinging her veil transparent, triumphant,
Over the face of the Earth in pursuit of her lover, the Sungod;
Swift on his tracks she is happily smiling in hope to o'ertake him
Ere he drop underneath the last rim of the rounded horizon,
Though to keep her afar he out-thrusts the long arms of his sunbeams.
Now he has leaped in the Ocean, she following rapidly after,
While the Ethiop Night has slunk down the Sangamon Valley
And is sneaking up slowly to darken the hill of New Salem—

Hark! there is heard in the sky overhead a loud detonation
All of a sudden, the Heavens flash full of the spatter of sparkles,
Till the whole dome of the stars seem thundering out of their orbits
Into some cosmical battle which fires just now its first cannon
Over the village, whose people are quaking in terrible wonder,
Palely upturning their faces and asking: "What is it the sign of?"

So they began to delve in themselves for an interpretation.
Every person first thought of some ill to himself now foreshadowed,
Then he sought to review all the deeds he had done in his vengeance,
And he could find them swarming on each little speck of existence,
Till he fled from the prospect of dream-wrought damnation in terror.
Then he would think of his family, town, of his State and the Nation,
Soon selecting for doom what he deemed their deed most infernal,
Thus in himself his own soul was turned to a scene of Last Judgment.

Even the world was felt underneath to be
shaky by many,
Who remembered the wrath of the Lord as
pictured by Cartright,
Furious preacher predicting the end in a
grand conflagration,
Whereof the harbinger hot has been flared in
the Heavens as warning.
All New Salem turned prophet inspired by
that fire-ball celestial,
Dumbly forefeeling its fate, the hours it went
about ghost-like,
Hanging between two dreamworlds, living as
though in a fable.

Even calm Lincoln gave rein to his prognos-
tication,
Though he had read in a book about meteors
madly exploding
When they tore our outermost air in their
swift revolutions.
So he believed with cold science, still in spite
of his reason
Rose all the might of his underworld into his
sad premonition;
What the ages ancestral had laid in his soul,
was the stronger,
For it was tuned to the time which seemed
presaging destruction,

Tuned to the mood of the village forefeeling its own evanescence,
Tuned to the pang of his love with its woe of remediless conflict,
Which had pierced with its perilous point to the life of the dearest.
Even the bell of the school-house was seeming to gasp from its belfry,
Slowly transmuting its strain to a dirge with a resonance dying
Far on the throbs of the air enringing the village's hilltop;
Tolling together the folk, it seemed for itself to be tolling,
As it sighed out its low tintinnabular hum in the distance.

Slowly the people uneasy began to assemble together,
Not a joke would prosper, though several hopefully tried it,
Something hung heavily over the world both outer and inner,
Silent and spectral each stalked on his path to the school-house,
Which had a vanishing look as it sank in the dusk of the night-tide.
But now it gleams with small flares lit within from candles of tallow,

Long-fingered candles melted and cooled on
wicks in the tin-molds,
Shedding a flickering flame on New Salem
instead of the sunshine.

Mentor Graham was there preparing his desk
for the Chairman,
Also adjusting the seats in opposite rows for
contestants,
Who would come to debate this evening's
question appointed,
Which of the two, the red man or black, has
been injured more deeply;
Or as the race-hating borderer in his harsh
lingo would put it:
Which of the curses is bigger for us, the In-
jun or Nigger?

So the sage schoolmaster parted the places
of both the debaters,
Lest from near-by the quick blow might pur-
sue the sharp word of the speaker.
All predicted a white-hot time in discussing
the question
Which reached down to the core of the heart-
iest hates of the people,
Yea to the strifes far back unrecorded of
origin human,

Giving its ultimate task of atonement to civilization—
To associate in love the venomous blood of the races.

Troubled in foresight the master has hidden the long iron poker,
Also the slates and the inkstands of lead were unseen in their places,
Lest as weapons to clinch some argument they might be seized on.
But the ferule he kept in his hand, the badge of his calling,
While he left overhead the small switch of flexible willow,
Which would tickle the palm of the bad little boy caught in mischief.
All the shreds of paper and whittlings which littered the deal-floor
He had swept together with care and thrown in the wood-box,
Which had been used for various contents—quids of tobacco,
Broken old pipestems, corn-cobs, emptied bottles of whiskey—
Implements social of all frontiersmen wherever assembled.

Into that wood-box also was flung the live snuff of the candles,
Which the farmer would crop with his finger and thumb, without snuffers,
Suddenly slapping his hand on his thigh, the burn to get rid of.
Wisely the schoolmaster read in advance the mind of his people,
Read it in light of himself, for he felt in his heart the same conflict,
Well did he know that he too could be stormed in this struggle of races.
Now foreboding the strife of debate, himself he foreboded,
If some witling should twit him and make him boil over with passion,
While he was speaking the part assigned him on side of the negro
For an old memory left him a sizzling volcano down under.

Meanwhile knots of the folk were standing around the lit schoolhouse,
Talking of matters of neighborhood gossip, of crops and of business;
But each whispered that portent of Heaven, the meteor blazing;
Featured in awe was his face, while he spake in an undertone solemn,

Darkly forefeeling a fate to lurk in the presage uncanny,
Worse for his knowing not what, but certainly something prodigious.

Still one group cared not for the ominous sign of the fire-ball,
That was Doctor Palmetto, a group of himself, ever grumbling,
Bitter denier of all, denying at last his denial,
Who said No to the sign and to everything else but his No Sir,
Even to that in the end, if you gave him the time to get round to't—
Loudly proclaiming his freedom through science from all superstition.
He had already begun the wrangle outside on the darkey,
But he secretly aimed his poisonous squibs at his rival,
Lincoln, who had not yet appeared, though expected as speaker.
All for his advent were waiting as for the soul in their body:
"Where is our Abraham, usually prompt with his pouch full of stories?"

So they kept looking around with an eye-shot
at every newcomer:
"Where is our lawmaker Lincoln to right-
fully lead the discussion?
Surely the bottom will fall out unless he be
present as spokesman."
So they hummed through the groups, one
hummer alone was discordant,
Humming his Nay to it all until himself he
benayed too.

Well-a-way! up from the store is walking a
man unexpected,
Long since known in the town, but this morn-
ing returned from his absence—
Store-keeper Abner, O Fate! for years the
betrothed of Ann Rutledge!
Round him was raging her destiny's battle
with love and with promise,
Woe-darting center of conflict for her and
also for Lincoln.
All saluted him, but with reserve, which he
could not help noting,
So he appeared not hearty in answer as once
his frank wont was,
Well he knew that the people all minded his
unexplained conduct,
Taking the part of the maid, the favorite
fair of the village.

Not a word he vouchsafed in excuse, and nobody asked him;
Only one wag dared break a sly jest on his sudden appearance:
"Ab, was it you that popped down on our earth from the crack of that comet?
Well, no wonder it burst into thunder with you in its belly."
Still not a word he replied, but twisted a lip-grin sardonic,
Shunning and shunned he felt the discomfort before the whole people;
Possibly too he avoided all part in the praises of Lincoln.
Abe and Ab with their names fore-shortened were busily buzzing
From the tongues of an hundred putting a sting in their contrast;
So it came that the new-comer soon slipped away from the meeting.

Meanwhile responded to Doctor Palmetto pugnacious Jack Armstrong,
Who had fought in the Black Hawk War as Orderly Sargent,
Hating the Indian and not altogether in love with the Negro,
Yet disliking black slavery, wishing it off in the distance,

Out of the State where he lived, but it troubled him not in Kentucky—
Strongly affected to Lincoln who once in a wrestle upset him.
Words were getting too choleric, both were shouting together
When the schoolmaster rapped with his ferule the sash of the window,
Then flung open the door of the schoolhouse and bade people enter;
All rushed in like a flock when the sheep spring into the sheepfold
After the bell-wether, whose little tinkle they hear and then follow.

"Let this meeting be opened—the moment has come and has gone too"—
It was Mentor, the master, who picked up the word that awaited:
"But I nowhere can see the orator choice of the evening,
Though I heard Uncle Jimmy declare he was seen in the distance
For a single short glimpse, and then vanished away in the brushwood,
Fleet as the timorous deer, when it feels itself hit by man's eye-shot.
He may come yet—but debate must begin—has already begun here."

Meantime the people had noisily entered and
taken their places,
Once again the wise Mentor addressed the
now seated assembly:
"Still one warning: cool be the argument,
good be the order,
This is the temple of light, O burn it not up
in your passion!
You can destroy it by wrath, though you may
not fire it with tinder;
Be it the shrine of sweet peace consecrated
now by your example."

So exhorted the schoolmaster uttering saws
of sage counsel
Which he deeply forefelt the chief need of
the present occasion,
For in his heart he read to himself quite the
same sort of warning,
His own soul he knew as the scene of a similar
danger,
What he saw writ in his bosom he spoke as
the truth to his people,
Well aware that the Furies and Fates in the
world were his own too,
That underneath all strife with its death lay
the soul's resurrection.

There sit the folk in their ranks divided almost in the middle,
Two are the sides, each taking their seats on the opposite benches,
Facing each other with places assigned for the leaders contestant.

Where is Lincoln? Hardly he knows just where he himself is,
Wandering lone through by-paths he turns from the way to the schoolhouse,
Dodging now into the moon-shade to keep himself hidden from eye-sight.
To the debate had stormed up within him the fiercest repugnance,
Far too dread was the inside debate to hold the one outside;
Nor could he summon the mood for telling the people a story,
Who were expecting an hour arabesqued with his fancy and humor,
As he wont when he trod in the village's treadmill of humdrum.
But he was living a story far deeper than what he could fable,
For he had heard from the maid that Abner might soon be expected,
Yea might stroll to the schoolhouse into his presence this evening,

While perchance he was spinning for fun a fiction fantastic,
Whereat he knew that every fine thread of his story would snap off.
Even the dream of seeing the rival had started a thrill of convulsion,
To whose fit he was chained by fate in a struggle demonic,
Which he could never escape, and of which he could not be victor,
Throbbing his day and his night in the throes of a torture infernal.
So he saunters about, lashed forward by love's sweetest longing,
Yet at the same time harried with hate's unearthly damnation;
Love of the one is fiendishly coupled with hate of the other,
Each of them scourging the victim in turn with rivalry jealous,
Till of a sudden he stands on the banks where he harkens the prattle
Lipped by the Sangamon's tremulous ripples along its low stream-bed,
Where he can watch the luminous dance of the silvery minnows
Leaping up sidelings over the pebbles to kiss the young moonbeam
Which is swooning in tender caresses upon the lit lap of the landscape.

Still that scene can but call him away from himself for a moment,
Looking around he beholds high-perched on its hill-top the school-house,
Now illumed through the windows it shines to beckon him thither,
But he can not respond, still choosing the talk of the waters,
Though it be wordless, to the mad clash of debate with its uproar,
Rambling until he stops on the slope and looks down at the mill-weir,
Where he again sees himself directing the flight of his flat-boat,
Years agone when once it had lodged on the dam in the river—
Where too he sees a fair phantom that stood on the spot where he now stands,
Who throbbed sympathy down to him just at the top of his labor,
Then a handkerchief waved as in triumph the feat was accomplished.
That was the first time he saw her, never again of him unseen
During her life and even when life has with her evanished.

Thus he reviews his happiest moment in tender remembrance

Wafted from sorrow to joy, from joy whelmed back into sorrow,
Sighing his heart out as he went creeping foot-sore, fate-weary,
Through the moon-shaded nooks fay-haunted of valley and village;
All New Salem had turned to the flit of a shadowy specter,
As he glanced up and saw the faint flicker of light from the school-house,
Whence he thought he could hear the shrill voice of some passionate speaker.

Suddenly feeling turned speech when he spoke to himself as his other:
"What an oppressive presence! a fume flows the Sangamon sultry,
Where all seemed on a time upspringing in buoyancy youthful!
What a sweltering world weighs on me and crushes me inward!"
So he sat down on a stone and gazed at the Sangamon star-gemmed,
Which then appeared to run through his soul as it flashed on his eye-sight,
Like a thread which threaded his life with memories tender
Since the time he first floated its current along to the river,

Which thence plunged him down into the
frown of the mad Mississippi.
Thus the Sangamon small grew great through
Lincoln who henceforth
Dwelt not far from its banks as it wound
through his days till his sunset,
Laving the land not far from his tomb still
today we may see it.

But just now sad Lincoln broke down at the
view of the waters.
"I must leave here else I shall fling me out
into yon mill-dam,
Memory dear in the past has become my de-
spair in the present."
So he gave a quick turn and shot through
an alley of leafage
From the sight of the river which coiled
through his soul like a serpent,
As if to bear it away from his body off into
dark Hades.

But as he townward was musing he saw a
lone light in the window
At the home of the Rutledges fitfully flicker
in pulses;
Lincoln stopped in his tracks and gazed,
foreboding some illness:

"Shall I go to inquire and offer my service if needed?"
So he balanced both sides of himself suspending the balance;
Then again he looked up and marked the weird light of the school-house,
Which like a Will-of-the-Wisp kept quivering over the hill-top.
There he stood swaying between the two flickers, both of them bodeful,
Till of a sudden he heard from the school-house booming an uproar,
With a tap of the bell, one tremulous tap on the night air—
What can it mean? So we turn back our tale to probe for the secret.

Let us now enter the little red round-house laughing in moonshine,
Where the people are seated with lungs full of cheers for the speakers,
Somewhat boisterous yet good natured, with jokes of the backwoods
Bandied about from one mouth to the other in many a guffaw;
Each of the sides has taken its seats, quite equal in numbers,
As the sage schoolmaster marshals them in to the stroke of his ferule;

Swelling his bosom up to a vociferous pitch he commands them,
So that above all the noise his voice can be heard bidding silence:
"Fellow-citizens, hear me and halt for a moment your tongue-spree,
Squire Ebenezer I move we make chairman controlling this meeting,
Balancer fair of Justice whenever she tilts on the pivot,
With authority's mien he will render the rightful decision.
There he is! look for yourselves how gravity sits in his visage,
Also sits in his belly well freighted with many good dinners."

Coarse was that humorous punch at the Squire's most prominent organ,
But the Schoolmaster even, the cultured, classical Mentor
Never could quite get rid of the straightforward brogue of the border.
All of the audience roared at the eloquent burst of the speaker,
Voting a thunderous Aye with clapping of hands and with stamping.

But there was one who refrained from the plaudits and even from voting,
Doctor Palmetto, the cutting objector-in-chief of the village;
Still his No he out-spoke not, but let it be told in his action.

Next the schoolmaster gleefully grappled the Squire by the forearm,
Leading him up with a laugh to the platform of honor, thus saying:
"Here, take my badge, this ferule, which to you I resign now;
Yonder suspended the gad is, which you may have to make use of,
Trouncing these grown-up children to order, as I do their young ones;
Nor shall I seek myself to exempt from what I've inflicted,
You may be forced to schoolmaster here the schoolmaster also,
Give then in turn his own medicine to him by right of your office,
Show him new proof of his faith in the law of the Fates and the Furies."

Merriment ran in a titter around the full room, while the Squire shook

With a huge laugh that bounced up and down
on his prominent organ;
Still he beat on the desk with his ferule,
calling for order,
In the lull he then cried out: "What is the
will of this meeting?"
Note again the sage schoolmaster, rising he
reads off the question:
"Which one has suffered more wrong from
the whites, the red or the black man?"
This from a paper he holds in his hand, and
then he announces:
"As the first of our speakers tonight we
had chosen James Rutledge,
He with his dignified calm would have set
us the worthy example;
But he has to be absent, detained by the mal-
ady sudden
Which has seized on his daughter; may God
save her life for our blessing!"
All bowed their heads and silently prayed
in response the same prayer.

Then upsprang for a speech New Salem's
old fiery fifer,
Commonly called Tom Cunes, who had fought
in all wars with the Indian,
Whom he hated with all of the borderer's
hate of the red skin;

As a boy he had fifed for Mad Anthony Wayne in a battle,
Then as a man he was fifer at Tippecanoe, but he shot too;
Fighting he fifed in the furious fight at the death of Tecumseh,
Which every day with his tongue he fought over again in New Salem.
Lastly through his gray mustache for Lincoln he fifed against Black Hawk.
Numerous wars of his own he had waged by himself on the border
With the red devils—so he would grace them —giving and taking;
Scars he abounded in—one of a tomahawk over his cheek-bone,
While on his scalp he would show the grim gash of an Indian's knife-blade.

All these exploits he now ran on recounting, with more still to draw from,
Telling of Daniel Boone whom he met once up in Missouri,
Telling of how he outwitted the red-skins when taken their captive,
How he escaped from the stake with the faggots lighted around him:

Down fell the ferule on time in the hands
of the strict Ebenezer,
Who had tallied the minutes upon the Dutch
clock in the corner,
When old Tom cried out: "I hav'nt yet told
of Notoka,
Sweet Indian girl who loved me, the white
boy, and kissed me."

But said the chairman: "Hundreds of times
we have heard that already,
On the streets you have told the story for
years in New Salem:
Tom, that girl was the only red face you ever
bowed down to,
Well you know that white Barbara who is
the wife of your bosom
Always has vetoed your telling that tale of
red love in her presence,
Hating the Indian girl as much as you hated
the parent.
Barbara here we shall follow, so we now call
for the next one,
Abraham Lincoln—not yet arrived—what is
it that keeps him—
Who was to shine the bright oratorical star
of the evening
And to spin us his yarn of the deeds in the
halls of Vandalia?"

Then the tongue-quick Mentor at once by the people was chosen
As the next spokesman, to tell of the wrongs by us done to the negro;
Not unfit was the choice, though regarded by some with suspicion,
For he was thought to favor at heart abolition of slavery.

Off he started his speech with the start of that African cargo
Which first landed the blacks long ago on the shores of Virginia,
Tracing the history up to the Compromise named from Missouri,
Which he declared the Devil's infliction of Hell on our country.
But behold the division halving the little round school-house!
Hark the one half applauding, the other dissenting in murmurs!
Still the chairman kept rapping with strokes of his ferule for order,
While he turned to the schoolmaster monishing looks to be careful;
Thus the deep split of the time was revealed in the town of New Salem,
Which gave presage of what was to come in the State and the Nation.

All were agreed on expelling the Indian, the savage ungodly,
But the African stirred up a far deeper strife with his problem.
Only one man in a whisper spoke sympathy with the wild red-skin,
Blaming the theft of his lands and lamenting his race's destruction;
But the low speaker was drowned in the hubbub over the darkey,
Who was not owner of land, not owner he was of himself even.
But the tempest grew calm at last to the voice of the chairman,
Who with a vigorous smile turned his look on the speaker, thus saying:
"Mentor, beware—the schoolmaster present am I—so remember;
See yon gad on the wall—and mark too the play of this ferule—
On your own skin may be written the judgment of Fates and of Furies."

Coolly the orator started, but quickly waxed hot in his fervor
As he uttered his prophecy glimpsing that day in the future
When the black slave would forever be freed by some great liberation.

Then the hurrahs broke from this side, and hooting and howling from yonder,
While the fused schoolmaster rose more fervid and daring than ever,
Standing his ground till he faced down the tumult with help of the chairman.
Then he reared up on tiptoe and screamed at the top of his windpipe:
"You, New Salem, forget not how you the lecturer hounded,
How you once smothered free speech—you now are trying to stab it—
You must pay for that deed yet, its guilt you will have to atone for—
You set fire to free print in those pamphlets, you too will be burning."

Fiercer than ever broke loose the storm at such doom of the village,
Even the chairman smote down on the desk with his ferule reproving
Mutinous words of the schoolmaster naughty whose seat he was filling.
Each of the sides sprang up on the small amphitheater's benches,
Facing each other, some shaking their fists and shouting reproaches;
Keenly the nerve of the time had been pricked with the tip of the needle—

That sharp tip of the schoolmaster's tongue
with its poisonous word-sting
Which had hit to the heart with the threat
of retributive Furies.

Forward into the center sprang Doctor Palmetto the wrathful,
Who had led the mad mob which once burnt up the lecturer's pamphlets,
Shouting white-hot at the speaker: "You are the worst mollycoddle!"
Nobody knew just what the word meant, it was new in New Salem,
But all thought it must mean something terrible, sounding so fiercely;
One man thundered: "That is some more of your devilish Latin,
But you shall not scare us any longer talking your ghost-talk."
So Jack Armstrong, the athletic twister of men for that township,
Friend of Schoolmaster Graham and also of Lawmaker Lincoln,
Sprang forth into the buzzing arena, coat off for the battle,
For the Armstrong name he would justify always by muscle;
Much he disliked the Doctor's big words, though he knew not their meaning,

So he flung out the epithet which would open
the sluices:
"You are a liar!" he cried at the top of the
boisterous tumult.

Meanwhile also the Squire had hurried down
into the middle,
Loudly commanding peace in the name of
the law and his office,
Standing between the two combatants who
had stopped at his order,
When a sharp knock is heard at the door—
behold James Rutledge,
Who in a pallor beseeches the doctor to go
to his dwelling
With all haste, for his daughter has suddenly
sunk in a fever.
"Speed to your duty!" the Squire thus bade
the belligerent Doctor,
Leading him through to the doorstep whence
with the anxious father
He shot off in the dark, still menacing:
"This is not ended."

Mark now the schoolmaster, how he has
weaponed himself for the warfare,
That long poker he grasps in one hand with
a look of defiance,

In the other he clutches the inkstand of lead as a bullet,
Both he had hid out of sight to keep them from passionate fighters;
But the Squire pushed up and quickly disarmed him, repeating,
"Now I am forced to schoolmaster here the schoolmaster also
On his own self to example his faith in the Fates and the Furies."
Even the gad he took down from the wall and shook it at Mentor,
Whereat his rounded abdomen fell into a stormy convulsion
In response to his features brimimng all over with laughter.
Soon the people too caught it, at first in circuits of giggles,
Till the whole mass breaks forth, both sides exploding together
Into a common outburst of merriment at the two actors;
So in a laugh the strife of the time is solved at New Salem,
But not forever, perchance; still hearken, ye laughers, a moment:
"Now I adjourn this meeting just at its happiest temper,"
Said the chairman in glee and faced his audience homewards;

But as the crowd was leaving the house he
snuffed out the candles,
Using his fingers as snuffers and throwing
the snuff in the wood-box.
Then as he groped in the dark, he by acci-
dent clutched on the bell-rope,
Giving a whirl to the bell which sounded
one toll o'er the village
With a shiver of echoes knelling afar in the
night-spell.
All the people heard it and turned their
laugh to a tremor,
As they remembered the mystery shot in
the skies at their village;
And the schoolmaster heard it, trudging
along to his quarters,
Quivering still with the throes of the words
he dared speak in the meeting,
Words of bold prophecy uttering penalty on
the wrong-doer,
But his chief marvel was over the ominous
absence of Lincoln.

Where is Lincoln? Hardly he knows just
where he himself is,
Still in a stray, as if seeking his own lost
soul to recover;
In his revery slowly he strides through a field
to the roadway,

Which again leads by the mansion of Lady
Eulalia Lovelace,
Of whose courteous friendship rise reminis-
cences gentle.
But he noticed the hedge was uncropped and
the yard was uncared for,
Even the well-known gate stood unhinged
and was hanging half open.
What could it mean—such neglect—and in
her—the pink of all neatness?
Every fence-corner showed a new revel of
weeds in their freedom.
Had the soul of that beautiful woman quit
also its mansion?
Musing that only his mood may mirror the
night's melancholy,
Glides he along in the dark underneath the
still mulberry's branches,
Where he recalls the sweet scenes of the one
afternoon of love's life-work,
Just a few hours old, still mightily storming
in heart-throbs.

But of a sudden he thinks with a clash of his
breath the new meaning
Which now thrills in his brain from the last
tearful gleam of Ann Rutledge,
As at her parting she looked up, and sobbed
out the pain of her soul's wound,

Fervently asking of Heaven if this be her
second betrothal,
And in a prayer appealing to God to come to
her rescue.
Then as she spoke she revealed her agony
tearing her features,
For she thought of her promise of love as
now double in conflict,
Which gave a stab to her soul and cut it in
twain to the bottom;
Still each half of herself seemed smiting in
frenzy the other.
Now he remembered how she had dropped
to her seat in a pallor,
Though she valiantly rallied and set out
alone for her dwelling.
Lincoln repeated her agony all of a sudden
within him,
When it fully came over him what she had
felt in her anguish,
For the same struggle had made him her
counterpart throbbing its torment.

So he arose in a pang to follow her path to
her homestead,
Till he came to the spot where flashed the
two flickering light-points
Into his auguring eye through the night
from two opposite quarters,

Yet to his mood both spoke in a similar language of portent.
Listen! what is that sound which he hears from the little red school-house?
Voices commingled and pitched in a scream too loud for one speaker!
Bodes he: "Well do I know a fought combat might lurk in that question;
Can it be that some hothead has flung in the meeting his fire-brand?
Has the irascible Doctor perchance been starting a tumult?
Heavens! I may be needed! How can I drive myself thither!"

But of a sudden the light goes out, and dark are the windows.
Lincoln, hid in the moon-shade cast by the boughs of kind beeches,
Silently watches the people stream homeward away from the school-house,
Till suave silence is lord of the night, and abed is the village.
Slowly he strides to the Public Square painfully brooding
On the twin agonies, that of himself and that of the maiden,
Each of which doubles anew with a cut both inward and outward,—

Look at it there! a brief flicker darts out of
the school-house's window,
Then it ceases and leaves the whole hill-top
in slumberous darkness:
"Only my fantasy gleams thus, illuming the
phantoms of night's swoon—
Still I behold the faint light but steady from
Rutledge's window."

So his two selves keep quizzing each other,
affirming, denying.
Mooded in gloom's premonition of fate he
paces his pathway,
When he looks up once more to contemplate
the heaven-tipped belfry.
See again the fleet flashes mysterious over
the windows,
Tongues of flame that seem hissed from the
mouth of a fire-breathing dragon,
Then with a flare they lap back to the dark-
ness inwalled of the school-house.
"Not my own eye," he reflected, "has feigned
that luminous phantom."
So he resolves to slip up the hillside and
probe for the secret
Which had touched far down to a chord un-
der-grown in his nature,
Weirdly connecting his life with some doom
of destiny coming.

But just when he would take the first step, the creak of a door-hinge
Over the Public Square with a music uncanny fell grating!
Thence he beheld two men stride forward and stand on the pavement
Talking earnestly, face to face, a few moments together,
One with his hat on bowed to the other whose head was uncovered,
Speaking his farewell words so loud that Lincoln could hear them:
"Friend, tomorrow again I shall come at the turn of her illness."
That was the Doctor addressing Ann Rutledge's sore-troubled father,
Who hurried back to the house, while the Doctor trudged drearily onward.

Now the big ball of the moon has rolled down the dome of high heaven,
Sliding beneath the horizon and turning to night the lit landscape,
Whose dark folds from one bluff to the other have filled up the valley,
Under whose cover the Sangamon grumbles invisible murmurs.

When he heard the dire words of the Doctor, Lincoln fell shot through
With a thunderbolt barbed of anguish, and lay in the star-shade
Cast by a maple upon whose tortuous roots he coiled up in convulsion.
There he lapsed to a somnolent swoon, half awake, half dreaming,
When he visioned an endless procession of years winding onward,
Bearing their hero they mournfully trod in a line down to doomsday;
Oft he essayed to snatch a sly peep at the face of their God-born,
Whom the years, though mortal themselves, keep ever immortal,
Till that youth caught a glimpse of an old wrinkled cheek in the coffin,
Then he recognized fully the lines in those deep-furrowed features,
Talking aloud in his dream: "I know ye—I am myself this."

Fire! Fire! pierced a shrill shout with its terror the sleep of the village.
Lincoln awoke and sprang to his feet in the might of his startle,
Suddenly saw he a blaze leap out of the roof of the school-house

And illumine the hill-top with flashes on trees
and on houses.
Fire! Fire! thrilled the shout of the people
producing a shiver,
As each bore on a run to the scene the house-
hold's big bucket,
And a woman came rushing half-dressed with
her kitchen's clothes-boiler;
Soon one ladder was brought which reached
to the eaves of the building,
Up whose rungs were soon handed the slop-
ping pailfuls of water.

Fire! Fire! But hark! the bell begins clanging
—the swift-clapping fire-bell!
Deed of the schoolmaster bursting the door in
and clutching the bell-rope
For his last ring which tolls now the funeral
pyre of the school-house.
See too the belfry in flames which lap up a
cone of fleet fire-tongues!
Down rolls the bell on the roof and fitfully
rings its own death-knell,
Till it smites on the ground and breaks into
pieces still chiming
As they fall, at the feet of the villagers listen-
ing sadly.

Lincoln now hastened to help with the rest,
but all to no purpose;
Still as he passes the store, he sees Abner
saving his own first,
Who on his roof with bucket and broom runs
fighting the sparkles.
So the village's center of light has illumed
its last lesson,
Now it spells but a heap of hot cinders droop-
ing to ashes.

Lincoln surprises them all as he slips to a
group of his friends there,
Darkly discussing the problem: What could
have started the blazes?
Accident be it—or purpose? Whom can we
blame for disaster?"
"Strange," says Lincoln, "Twice there fell
in mine eye from a distance
Fiery flashes lolling their tongues in wrath
for a moment
Out of this schoolhouse when the night's noon
already was nearing;
I had started to search, but the flickers would
die out in darkness,
So I dismissed them as only the foolery
flashed by my fancy,
Or as the shimmering glint of the moonshine
glanced from the windows.

Probably mine was the sole eye awake in this
town—but I went not."
Then interrupting him sighfully spake the
schoolmaster Mentor:
"When the door I broke open I noticed just
where the tinder had started,
Still was blazing the wood-box where we
would throw the old paper.
But I cannot conceive for me how or why it
should kindle."

Here of a sudden the schoolmaster's speech
and his sobs too have halted,
For there rose on his soul his faith in the
Fates and the Furies—
Furies retributive, ever returning the deed
unto mankind.
And he recalled the swift words of his proph-
ecy lurid that evening,
Judging the Powers would balance the burn-
ing of print with a burning.

Doctor Palmetto was present and gazed at
the wrath of the blazes,
Gratified grimly to see the fulfillment of what
he predicted,
While on the spot he delighted to utter his
dark diagnosis:

"This is also a symptom, I hold, of the time so deeply diseaséd;
Everywhere I discover this fever in man and the world too,
For it is racking not merely this town, but this State and this Nation.
Now like a plague it is seizing the innocent maid in her flower,
Bringing the malady speedy to whelm her down under her grave-stone."
Further he spake not, but all thought of his beautiful patient,
As they breathed a still prayer, heart-heaved for her quick restoration.
Lincoln slid into a shadow to throw down a tear in his sorrow.

Note too a man who now slips from the group and plods his path homeward,
Not a word of parting he speaks, not a word on the fire he utters,
For he reproaches himself as the cause of this flaming destruction,
Simply recalling in dole his last deed of snuffing the candle—
That was Squire Ebenezer who had once builded the structure,
Chosen its circular shape and selected its site on the hill-top,

Far overlooking the land round about as a presence inspiring.
Chance had made him destroyer of what of his own he held dearest,
In his silence he seemed to be hearing the voice of a judgment.
Slowly pacing his way he would ponder: "Here I cannot rebuild it—
Done is its work—so is mine, perchance, too—
No, I swear never!
This dead school-house I yet shall restore to a young resurrection."

Mournfully all the citizens glanced at the smouldering ash-heap,
Now but the emptied skull where housed once the mind of the village;
Soon they turned from the sight of their sorrow and sped to their door-sills,
Each man trying in vain to peer through the mystery's darkness,
Yet weighed down with a feeling forebodeful of doom in his spirit,
Whispering: "This is the judgment which sent as its signal the fire-ball."

Last of the people to leave are two persons, diverse yet concordant:

William the wainwright and Mentor the pedagogue stray off together;
In a meandering silence they flit through the star-gloam like specters,
Till the sorrowful schoolmaster dooming breaks out in a heart-burst:
"Deepest of all is my loss—my vocation lies dead in those ruins—
O my life! it seems gone! I feel it has ended in nothing—
Rounded itself to a zero with many a flourish and flounder."

"Nay," says William the wainwright, who speaks from the center of cosmos:
"Spark of the Master eternal, the light on this hill-top you kindled
Shall not go out while the world in its whirl keeps circling its orbit;
More immortal it is than the Sun which also shall burn out.
I and each of your pupils must die in our time like this school-house,
Still what you have helped make us endureth through all generations,
And if not here, then elsewhere you will upbuild the new school-house.

Friend, remember that word on the bell which
hung in the belfry—
Motto of Hope undying you wrote there—
Now live it—*Resurgam.*"

Book Thirteenth.

The Passing of Ann Rutledge.

"Doubtful the case is—not bodily ailment so much as mental;
Medicine goes not home to the point of the malady's fury,
But is rejected with Nature's disdain of a meddling intruder."

So said the Doctor turning away from the bed of his patient,
And addressing a word in low tones to her father James Rutledge,
Whose eye sphering a tear gave sign of his strong self-suppression.
"Only the Doctor in Heaven can help her, my art is now useless."

And as he spoke the physician made ready to pass from the sick-room,
But at the door he laid on the hand of the father a notelet,
Then he started away to visit some easier illness.
Still once more he turned round and spoke the parting injunction:
"Let her mind have its way now, there is no good in refusal.
I shall come no more, I think she is better without me."
For the Doctor observed how his patient averted her eye-balls
When beside her he sat and felt of her wrist at the blood-pulse.

As he stepped forth from the door of the house, he saw in the distance
Pensively pacing his path the tall figure of Abraham Lincoln,
Who oft glanced at the dwelling where lay the suffering maiden;
But the two men turned aside as if shying from each other's presence.

So Ann Rutledge was slowly approaching the goal of her conflict,

Which was cleaving her soul and had made
her life a long battle;
Every breath she could draw was renewing
the fateful encounter.
As she lay in her bed, she would look at the
ring of betrothal,
Throbs of deep anguish would flush on her
face her innermost struggle,
While she would tug at the stubborn red
pledge to free herself of it;
But let her wrench and twist as she might,
she could not remove it,
And the wrestle without but echoed the
wrestle within her.

Over the father who watched her with sym-
pathy ran the same surges,
Till he felt the tense throes of her sorrow
inside his own bosom,
And he cried out anguished in heart yet gen-
tle in accent:
"Let me file from your finger that ring which
so worries your illness—
Somehow it seems the one center of all of
your suffering, daughter."
"No, no!" pitching her voice to a scream she
would speak in her struggle:
"That I well might have done for myself
long since, but I could not.

It must remain where once it was put till it
roll off in freedom,
Or perchance till it let me remove it just by
my own power."
Then her voice would tone down her speech
to a happier cadence:
"Let me die here on this earth still true to
its law and my promise,
But obeying my love I must go to the Pres-
ence supernal!
Ah! two duties I feel in my soul, fiercely war-
ring each other,
Duty terrestrial, duty celestial belong not to-
gether,
Yet they both are nestled within me, clinching
my heart-strings.
Here below is nothing but strife for my days,
myself am asunder,
Mortal I feel in this frame, but my Love, I
know, is immortal.
May I perish of Love for the one, which was
promised another:
Let me be whole in my God Who is Love,
Creator of all things!"

So she spake in the might of her faith as she
rose on her elbow,
But she soon fell back on her pillow and
seemed to be thinking:

"Two commands I can hear—two laws—yet throttling each other—
I can feel their tumultuous wrestle in every blood-drop.
Go I must now to where they are one, in One Being eternal."
For a moment she calmed, then wrenched in a fiercer convulsion:
"Two betrothals are mine, and slaying each other they slay me,
Driving my love off the earth to win its eternal fulfillment;
Here below is the judgment, above is the song of salvation,
Here Love grapples with Death. but there it rises transfigured."
Then she sank into silence as if too deeply reflecting
For the power of words to utter the stretch of her spirit.

Slowlier drooped to a dreamful relapse her quivering eyelids,
That she might widen her inward vision to regions beyond her;
Still she bespoke her burden of heart while keeping her glance shut:

"I cannot live where Conscience and Love divide me in conflict,
What I ought not I must—and yet what I ought I must not;
Conscience is stabbing my heart, yet my heart is sapping my Conscience;
Placate my love of the law and the law of my love I cannot.
Love the one here I dare not, but I dare love him in Heaven.
God of my Hope that is deathless, take me up into Thy bosom!"

Thus in her temple of prayer she seemed to be holding her service
Over herself that her soul might be ready to speed its last journey,
When her father addressed her, seeking to bring her some comfort:
"Here is a message in writing put into my hand by the Doctor:
From your betrothed it was sent—he is coming to pay you a visit."
Then Ann Rutledge opened her eyes once more and sat up,
Voicing her wishes in words new-born of her heart's aspiration:

"Will he restore me my promise whose bond
has made me so hapless?
Will he release me from law that before God
I be guiltless?
He must say I am free and take back this
ring of betrothal—
That I be one in myself here, and one up in
Heaven above me."
Even she raises her arm as she stresses her
words with a gesture:
"Live I cannot, fulfilling a life of a limp love-
less duty,
Others may do so—both the man and the
woman—I shall not;
Rather, O let me die with the hope of my love
in the future."

Then she held out her ring-finger hand as if
making confession
To an invisible Power which touched her with
sudden renewal,
For she straightened her body once more in
the stretch of her vigor.
But her father could only reply in sympathy's
sorrow:
"He will be coming today to claim thee as
bride by thy promise."

Slowly she wilted to weakness again and sank
on her pillow,
As she spake to her father intoning despair
in the echo:
"Send for Lincoln at once to soothe me amid
my last soul-pain;
I would look on his love here again before
I am lookless,
Vowing anew my single betrothal to him—
him only."

Over the Public Square across from the home
of Ann Rutledge,
Lincoln sadly had sauntered and stood there
wistfully gazing,
Drawn by that consonant chord which brings
two people together,
Who, though remote in space, quaff the same
deep fountain of spirit,
Whose tuned feelings of oneness appear to
throw throbs through the distance,
Quite unconscious to both, who impart to
each other their presence,
That not only they feel but obey their mutual
devotion,
Till they utter the passionate word in love's
consecration.

When the father had beckoned him thitherward, Lincoln was ready;
Stepping quickly along, he but followed the pull of his being,
Till he had passed through the door and softly had slipped to the sick-room
Which heretofore was forbidden his presence by word of the Doctor,
Under the medical plea of the patient's dangerous illness.

But now the lovers were left all alone for the interview final;
Even the father withdrew in right of a bond that was deeper
Than a parent's affection, and Lincoln sat down by the bedside.
Sainted in look already, Ann Rutledge reached to her bosom,
Thence she drew forth the torn letter of Lincoln's former renouncement,
Torn in twain to the edge through the ink-red heart on the cover,
Sacredly kept the while by the maiden and secretly looked at,
For it would speak to her all the mystery masked of her being,
And it seemed to foresay the doom of her life in its conflict.

Calmly she then put it back to its place, bespeaking her action:
"I shall keep it and die with it, holding it here in my bosom,
That rent heart of your letter shall lie to mine own the nearest;
Buried with me it shall be, when I am laid in my coffin,
I shall bear it up with me to show at the high throne of Heaven,
As a witness of love before God at my coming espousals."

For a moment she halted and gleamed in the rapture of vision,
Then she turned to Lincoln and spake him her soul's consecration:
"No, I dare not destroy it, nor leave it on earth here behind me,
Thou hast sealed in this token thy love with mine everlasting,
Which will remain with thee here to be lived to its fullest fruition.
Hence I must go, but I now can forefeel that I never shall quit thee,
I shall drop down in thy life when the crisis is pushing thee hardest,
Shall ward off with my Love the heaviest blows of misfortune,

Which will be thine, for the greater the soul
the greater the trial."
Sobbing the youth upraised his hands to his
face for a moment,
Torn by the strongest human emotion he in
agony cried out:
"Go not, leave me not here—my life will be
death if without thee;
I shall follow thee, follow at once—let the
grave be our nuptials—
Why should I wait? Every day will be hence
for me only a dying."

Thus was the flood of his sorrow bursting the
limit of reason,
When the maiden gave answer, calling him
back to his world-task:
"Thy renouncement must live and be
wrought out by thee to fulfillment,
To thy time thou must show it transforming
thy life in sore trials.
Love thee below I dare not—but I may out
of Heaven.
Thou canst requite me from here in thy deed
with memory deathless.
My betrothal to thee is that—my only be-
trothal."

For a moment she rested, then worded her gasp with her last voice:
"Over thee still I shall hover, of Love the pure bodiless image,
And shall attend thee appearing just when thou needest my presence;
Hear me, henceforth thy love is not merely in me to be bounded,
But to the Love of all people will rise up thy love of Ann Rutledge."

Back she fell on her bed, but gently with pillows he propped her:
"Go not, my All, or let me go with thee," still sobbed he his heart-strokes.
But she was passing, though for a look she held open her eyelids,
Whence was gleaming enskyed of Love the bright benediction,
With the promise of Hope, which encircled her brow like a sun-wreath.
Lincoln felt in himself, as he gazed, her transfiguration
Pressing its form on his soul to stay there imaged forever;
Ghost-like to her he whispered: "This is my marriage eternal."

At the high vow her eye throbbed with a look of blest recognition,
When to her Lincoln repeated: "This is my marriage eternal!
Though thou in life art not mine, thy love I shall love now forever,
Now I am wedded to Love itself, through thee brought down from Heaven,
Thee I shall feel and re-live in all of the deeds of my future,
Not for one person alone, for the Person himself is my passion;
Over thy form now leaving I pledge my faith on God's altar:
Unto Love eternal this is my marriage eternal."

List! a rap was heard at the door, which pulled them back earthward
From beyond, then gravely the father entered announcing:
"Thy betrothed is here at the threshold and wishes to greet thee."

In steps Abner, the hitherto absent, but now again present,
Somewhat surprised to see lone Lincoln who speedily darts out.

Ann looked up at him steadily once with eye unreproachful,
Then she drew down slowly the curtain of vision forever,
Shutting him out from that world which she already had entered,
Leaving his law to the man, but bearing her love in her bosom
As her soul's witness to Heaven when summoned to stand before Judgment.
Only her hand she can lift up a little—no word she can utter—
Just the last act of her life—but mark the ring of betrothal!
How of itself it slips off from her finger now shrunken by illness,
Drops on the floor with a bound and rapidly rolls toward the doorway
Where sad Lincoln is passing out of the house with the image
Which he will wear on his heart till he too shall be summoned to Judgment.

Hastily Abner picked up the ring and sought to replace it,
Though he noticed the hollew-eyed socket, where flashed once the ruby;
Still by force he attempted to put it again on its finger

Which lay flexless and lifeless, though clenched in rigidity mortal
And refusing to take back what it had shed with the death-stroke.
That was the fateful pledge of the law which whelmed her in conflict;
But with the price of her life she paid off the debt of her promise.
Abner soon gave up the effort, and then with a look of foiled purpose,
Into his pocket he thrust the woe-laden ring of betrothal,
Which he once gave to her when it was set with the laugh of the ruby,
And appeared to foretoken the hour of happy espousals;
But it turned to an eye of evil, blood-shot in its glances,
Looking a demonic curse ever-present into the heart of the maiden.
Soon he with token returned has hastened away to his business.

So she passes, renouncing the love of her life for her love's sake,
Gone from the world though transfigured into a presence forever,
For she, eternally loving, will be the eternally living.

Lincoln beholding the deed of Ann Rutledge
is with her uprisen;
Into the Love re-born which is all Love he
wins the new baptism.
Still that wound will bleed all his days at
memory's time-beat,
For the rift is so deep that the Healer alone,
the one Healer,
Curer of all the scission within us and also
without us,
Can the sorrowless medicine send to heal him
to wholeness.

Soul-bowed Lincoln again has wandered
alone to the shade-tree,
Bell-topped mulberry hallowed now as a
shrine for his worship,
Which has beheld the holiest history lived by
the lovers,
Where he feels himself praying with her the
unspeakable prayer,
Who had left him all Love as her portion, not
merely her own love.

Crisp are the leaves which on him drop down
in tender succession,
As they return to the earth for repose in the
graveyard of Nature

Till they arise in the spring new-born to a
fresh foliation.
There he sits down underneath the low sighs
of the breeze-blown branches,
Which in tune with his heart-beat are breath-
ing him strains of condolence.

Soon he looks outward—he sees only vacancy
where stood the school-house,
Up he springs with a shock which shivers a
moment his being,
For the whole world seems quaking and fall-
ing to ruins about him.
But he recovers himself at the throb of his
new consecration,
While once more he rehearses his vow as the
creed of a life-time:
"Unto Love eternal, this is my marriage eter-
nal."

Book Fourteenth.

The New Life.

Days of the autumn, one after the other, tread onward to winter,
In a procession long-lined through time like a funeral cortege,
Leaves twirl silently down in a dance with the round of each moment,
Rendering back to the mother, the Earth, the substance once taken,
Who digs yearly their tomb for their burial over her bosom.
All the heart of the maple had burst and was dripping its crimson,
Ragged and broken, and sere had turned the green coat of the scrub-oak,
While the hickory grove was mortally yellow in foliage,

And its freed nuts fell crashing through twigs
to the roots of the parent,
Seeking to find a new home in the soil for
re-bearing their forbears.
Fruits, too, of orchard and forest were ripe
for a new generation,
Seeming in sorrow to kiss good-bye to the
love of the summer
As they started afresh in the world to fulfil
their own life-round.
Even the voice of the Sangamon sulky had
shrunk to a whisper,
Though in its ripple still gleamed the silvery
shine of the minnows,
Flashing their light-points of life in the eye
of the stranded beholder.

Lincoln had seen the beloved one dying be-
fore him, yet staying;
Sealed is that deed on his soul with its im-
age enshrined there forever,
Love universal now he has witnessed and
made his redemption,
Felt it within him as time-defying and death-
overcoming,
Through the maiden who chooses for love to
renounce her earthly existence,
And to await her bridal beyond in the pres-
ence of Heaven—

She above and he below—though by life they be sundered.
Ever present she lives in his toil as a guardian spirit,
Who will prompt him anew at each node of the fate sent upon him:
Oft renewing the look and the lisp of the words she last left him,
As Love's presence vanishing once then abiding forever.
Staying with her in life, he hopes to stay with her hereafter,
Love, at first mortal in birth, is his to be reborn immortal.

But along with her Love he will bear in his bosom her conflict,
Which will endure to the end of his days—the double soul's struggle—
One side is Duty below, while the other is Love up above him,
This will anchor his heart in its trial and light his way onward;
He must always re-live Ann Rutledge's lot in his labor,
Every day he has to enact her life and her death too,
Harmonizing the scission of soul whereof she has perished,

Suffering fully her fate in his own for a higher fulfillment,
Living her tragedy over and feeling its throes in each heart-throb
That he may rise above it the victor by loyal endurance;
So he conquers the world of harrying strife which she could not,
Death-transcending through death lives the love now of Abraham Lincoln.

Such is his mood welling up from the nethermost fount of his being,
As he sits on the settle beneath the lone mulberry's branches,
Praying again to the soul of his soul the unspeakable prayer,
Mid the slow rain of the leaflets of autumn down-falling to silence,
Mid the memories golden which drop from the past like a sun-shower,
Till the moment supreme when the two loving hearts were first plighted
Here, just here, underneath these sadly-draped leaves now inurning.
Then he exclaims in a heart-burst: "Here be that moment's renewal,
Here be re-vowed before this witnessing tree my new troth plight—

Unto Love all-embracing I give my self's
service forever."

Scarcely had fallen the word when suddenly
there in his presence
Stood a shape which at first he took for a
phantom supernal;
But he soon had discovered the look of good
William the wainwright,
Who began talking in fatherly tones that
quivered with pity:

"Lincoln, you I have seen as you wandered
around in your sorrow,
I have come now to say you a word of mine
own deep experience,
Thinking it might be a comfort to help you
hold up your burden.
You like me must walk in the shadow through
life lent of Nature,
Till there dawns in the soul the morn of a
new resurrection,
Till you transform the sorrow of death to the
death of all sorrow.
Her evanishment is but her real palingenesy
lasting,
If you will make her such—ever re-born of
the love in your spirit.

I have traveled already the road and well do
I know it,
Faith you must get in Death as the God of
man's purification,
Hard is the ransoming road—you can make
it a curse or a blessing,
Hard is the test and many fall in it—but you,
I vow, shall not."

Strong fell the words yet soothing the soul
of the sorrowful Lincoln,
Who not in speech but in look was beseeching
a further disclosure;
Turning his eyes to the distance began sage
William the wainwright:
"I have seen you haunting it yonder, the
green little churchyard,
Where is the fresh-turned sod which covers
the mortal Ann Rutledge,
Scarce could I hold back the waters of salt
from sympathy's well-head,
For my own Mariana lies there, not far from
the maiden;
Thus the cry of compassion was double, for
you and myself too;
Years it took me to wean my heart of that
spot of round greensward,
Where she rests outwardly buried—and still
I plant it with flowers—

But in my soul she never has died—she lives
and is active—
Aye she never is absent, but takes her abode
in my being;
As a God-like presence she comes to preside
in my workshop
Where as a token of worship she gives me the
guidance above me,
Which with the years of my toil becomes
more transparent in meaning."

In a revery far away Lincoln seems to be
gazing,
When he is waked by a press of the hand from
William the wainwright:
"You remember the love of the wheel which
you felt in my hand-strokes
And the prayer you heard which silently rose
from my labor;
All of it throbbed from the depths of love's
loss which once overwhelmed me,
That is the trial through which you too are
now passing, to prove you,
Death you are to transmute into life of benefi-
cent action—
Small is my work—a wheel—but yours will
be large, aye the largest."

Quickly the wainwright has vanished, leaving mute Lincoln in study
Over the words which seemingly tapped the hid fount of all doing,
Fate itself he has to constrain, the recompense getting.

But that image he carries along in his daily allotment,
As his spirit's most precious treasure for life consecrated,
Strangely transfigured to love, yea, the love of all Love such as God is.
And he will call up before him that shape in the pinch of his trials
With it communing like a Madonna by wordless petition,
Or he will tremblingly tell of it when in the mood sympathetic,
Oft-times citing the verses whose musical measures attune him
To restore the fair fleeting form of his love's early sorrow.

By it then healed he becomes again whole in the time's fierce disruption.
Such is the medicine which he prescribes to his soul in his scission.

That he may remedy by it the rent of himself
and his people,
Aye, the rent of the universe, ever renewing
its wholeness.

Book Fifteenth.

The New Migration.

"What an outrage! Nothing this winter they did, just nothing!
Lawmakers they may be called—to the State they are but a scandal,
Sitting with feet cocked up and drawing their pay at Vandalia!
Spending the time they are paid for by us in telling vile stories!"
Thus roared Doctor Palmetto. ever the village's censor,
Secretly giving a cut with his razorous tongue at his rival:
"No canal, no railroad, no appropriation, no nothing!"

So his Noes he kept piling up skyward till God seemed a nothing
To whose glory he builded a pyramid lofty of zeros,
Empty, hollow-eyed zeros which kept rolling asunder
Just of themselves, like a pile of dry skulls in the Doctor's own workshop—
Damning all he bedamned too himself in his sweep of damnation.

He was talking to Squire Ebenezer who strangely held silence,
Who oft looked at the hill-top where was once standing the school-house,
Which he had reared as the center of brain for the whole of New Salem;
Now it lay in its ashes, and broken the bell of the belfry,
In whose harmonious tones his life flowed attuned to a music.
Though he perceived the point of the thrust in the words of the Doctor
To be turned toward Lincoln, the lawgiver loved of the village,
Also the friend of himself, not a word in defence did he utter,
Nor in argument would he now balance the sides as his wont was.

See the Doctor again give a spank with his palm on the pine-box
Where the two were sitting in front of the store of the village—
Store of Abner who now has returned and taken possession;
There he stands in his door and hearkens the speakers in silence,
For he too with himself was holding a diligent query
Just concerning that future which all the village now peers at,
Tipped on its pivot of destiny toppling first forward then backward;
But the store-keeper silent shows not a trace of a feeling
For the vanishing town, for himself, or for love which has vanished.

So the keen Doctor's momentum of tongue speeds on unopposed:
"What a crotchety fate hangs over this work of town-making
As it bubbles up here in the West along every road-side!
Look at Chicago, rapidly rising to be the great city,
Look at New Salem, rapidly sinking to be but a cipher—

And the cipher itself is doomed before long
to be rubbed out!
Up and down the old rickety ladder of luck
we go wabbling,
Till we drop in the pit or wing upward a day
in the sunshine!
But with the death of our school-house we
whisper in sober reflection:
Next we shall bury our town and depart from
the graveyard forever."
Up sprang the Doctor now hushed, he too
had a twinge of compassion,
As he turned away from the store to attend
to his sick folk,
So let him vanish, prescribing for illness in
ailing New Salem.

But Ebenezer the Squire paced slowly his
pain-laden footsteps,
In his heart there suddenly surged a com-
munal sorrow
For the child of his mind whose growth he
had lovingly tended.
Soon he turned down the path to the shop
of William the wainwright,
Looking across the Sangamon Valley into
the sunset,
While crept over the hills the lessening sheen
of the evening

Turning to gloam of the twilight at first, then slyly to darkness,
Like a huge dragon that laps in its far fateful coil the whole earth-ball.
But not a sound was now heard of the chisel or wimble or hammer
Fitting the spoke in the hub of the wheel and arching the felloes;
And in the shop of Peter the blacksmith were puffing no bellows,
Silenced was song of the sledge and the anvil with ring of the iron,
Nor in their chorus would ever be echoed again the sweet bell-chimes
Rolling adown from the hill-top where perched the little red school-house.

Mark! in the yard stand covered with muslin the wagons for moving,
Whose stout wheels are the last here rounded by William the wainwright;
Piled up with household goods are the wagons and ready for hitching;
What can it mean? And who is starting another migration?
Slowly out of his shop to the path steps William forebodeful;
Often he wries his neck to gaze at his tenantless quarters,

Where he had happily wrought to a finish a
piece of his life-work.
Now he was taking a look star-lit at what
he was leaving,
When the Squire he met whose question he
thoughtfully answered:

"Well I must quit New Salem moving my
destiny onward
Over the Sangamon narrow and over the
broad Mississippi;
Somewhere on the frontier I shall help to re-
make a new center
Aye a new wheel of a town with its hub and
its spokes and its felloes
Raying out over the land a network which
draws men together,
For in that practice alone can I give my best
help to my brother."

With a deep smile from his soul the Squire
responded approval,
But the wainwright stopped not the thrust
of his words in his ardor:
"Full five years have I stayed here putting
on wheels the new country,
Till it will run of itself for the future with
help of my pupils,

Two of them whom I have trained in my
workshop of soul and of body;
Thus the whole people may rally as one in
their communal spirit
Then may return each man to himself in his
own isolation—
For we must all go back to ourselves that we
live too in common."

Here gray William down drooped to the look
of a long reminiscence,
Which mutely mooded the Squire when slow-
ly again spoke the wainwright:
"Thrice before I have migrated starting
from Penn's Philadelphia,
Wheeling three towns of the backwoods that
they may better associate;
Old I am getting, only once more I fain would
be wheelwright
To the youngest community now being born
on the border."

Of a sudden to William's surprise flashed
Squire Ebenezer:
"Oh that feeling how well do I know it! with-
in me has prodded
Just the same impulse which will never al-
low us to sit still

In one place for a life-time but pushes us onward and onward
To be town-makers irresistibly up to the sunset,
Sowing the land with communal seed, as the farmer his wheatfield—
Builders of institutions—just that is our highest vocation—
Architects all of the town, the county, the State and the Nation;
And still further perchance the ages shall beckon us forward
To our great destiny glimpsed in a new political order."

Here the words of the Squire had quit him, no longer rhapsodic,
But he pensively whipped round from future to past recollecting:
"More than once I have moved since I started a youth in Kentucky,
Crossing the river Ohio to seek the domain of a Free-State,
For I liked not the name of a slave in our country of freedom;
Then to wild Indiana I came with a communal bee-hive,
Swarming out of the old to the new on the barbarous border;

Lastly I hived me just here in New Salem with Rutledge, its founder;
Somehow I always was chosen to hold up the balance of justice,
Which bids stability both in the law and the temper judicial."

Quite unaware to himself the Squire had lapsed to confession,
As his head he bent over and whispered in tone confidential:
"Let me entrust to you what in my heart I now am, my good William,
That unsettling desire has uprooted me too, I must leave here;
On your journey look back, you will see me crossing the river,
That is the Father of Waters who roars in a rage at our passage
Over his torrent to where we shall plant the new communal structure,
Such as we bear in our brain to re-model the work of our fathers,
Long transmitted by time but unfolded by us to the New-World,
Which is now starting to live its own life out here in the North-West.
Yea, a new school-house and better shall rise up in rejuvenation,

And the new school-bell shall chime me again,
fulfilling its motto."

"That is the best news we ever have heard,"
said William the wainwright,
"In our young enterprise you were the one
most needed, most wished-for,
You shall be squire again in our town to arise
on the border
Weighing out justice impartial to all in the
scales of your brain-pan.
Others are going, farmers, mechanics, young
folk of our village,
Which already appears to me old, perchance
in its dotage.
Uncle George Trueblood now wavers, despite
his conservative habit;
Sagging hither and yon, he may drop down
on us to-morrow."
Silently thoughtful the Squire still listened
the wainwright forecasting:
"Well do you know that the ruffian, the
drunkard, the criminal fail not
On the frontier, till the reign of the law with
its arm overtake them;
You have been given that arm and still wield
it right here in New Salem—
Bring to our new town yourself, O Squire, O,
bring to us Justice."

Then the wainwright lowered his voice, as imparting a secret:
"Think of it! all of us—aye myself too—are limit-surpassers,
Mark! we may sometimes turn in our zeal to be limit-transgressors;
Hear me! the bound-breaker easily runs to be law-breaker also;
You are to balance us into the new world out of the old one,
Lest to chaos we fall while striving up higher to cosmos,
Ever uniting the order transmitted with order arising,
Ever transforming the old institution through freedom upstorming."

Meditatively Squire Ebenezer to William responded:
"Let me grant it—once more I would have me a little land-clearing,
That I may see our young West fast sloughing its skin of wild Nature;
But far deeper I long for the days of my happy town-making,
Raising once more the communal giant informed of my spirit
That he put on his body a garment of dwellings and workshops,

Building himself the germinal home of the new institution.
Gladly would I have Lincoln along in the young habitation,
His is a soul that is filled with the soul of the age's right order,
But he may cling to the spot which entombs his memories tender."

Both the men lapsed to the silence of thought, for they too remembered—
Till Ebenezer again in his words repeated his heart-beats:
"May I uprear once more the round school-house voiced with the school-bell,
Which in my dying hour I hope to hear tingling its message
That I too shall arise from my death to my heirship immortal."

Then the wainwright lit up his reply with the light of his visage:
"Friend, delay not, for this is the highest of human attainment:
Every minute to live in our work the life everlasting;

Thus, only thus, do we win it from time and
keep it forever,
Even New Salem shall still be re-lived in a
new resurrection."

Book Sixteenth.

Resurgam.

Solitude now is the soul of sad Lincoln fleeing all friendship,
For the first time in his life he shuns where the people assemble,
He no more is heard telling a story or anecdote mirthful;
Inward he turns and passes his days shut up in his self's world,
Even the sound of a laugh can stir him to tears of fresh sorrow.
All that he in the past has been is melting within him,
Character, purpose in life, his faith, his veriest self hood,
All have been flung in the fiery furnace of Death to be tested;

Sometimes his reason would sink out of sight in the flood of affliction,
Dipped for a moment into the depths of man's deepest experience.
Oft he would steal unseen to a new-made grave for his solace,
In the mortal to rise to communion with what is immortal,
Sorrow renewing his love, but his love too renewing his sorrow,
Giving the discipline needful to mount from all bonds of misfortune,
Till the loved one no longer is past but eternally present.

Thus the mourner has stamped on his heart the deed of Ann Rutledge,
Imaging her in her love he can rise into love universal.
She will spring out of air to him when he is harried by trouble,
Or when hit by men's hate he is tempted in vengeance to hit back;
She will haunt him ghost-like in his night till again he shall love her,
If in the trials of time he forget her deed's benediction.

Days wore away, more sure of himself he began to be growing,
When he resolved to visit the Lady Eulalia Lovelace,
Known as the comforter gentle of grief-laden souls in New Salem;
But at the door of the mansion he met another possessor,
Who to a question replied that the Lady had moved to Virginia,
To the gray manse of her father and forefathers, for her two boys' sake.
They must be gentlemen bred on the good old colonial pattern
Henceforth eschewing the mode of the life of the pioneer western,
Lapsing far back to the past from the work of the State-building future.

"Still another fresh stroke! How the world seems going to pieces!
That is not all—she appears to me fated! so are her children!"
Thus he sighed for the loss of the Lady Eulalia Lovelace
Who to the town had given the grace of her courteous presence,
Lending her lordly home to works of the worthiest living,

Which enkindled a civilized gleam on the barbarous border.
Still she could not help showing the longing look of an exile
For the seats of the old cavaliers who centered at Richmond,
Though upon them a Fury already was writing destruction,
Which in his mood the torn Lincoln could feel through the time and the distance.

Then as he slowly returned to the highway, painfully pensive,
He was met by a line of new wagons just starting, not backward,
But still forward away to the West in strong aspiration;
Merely he said: "Again are coming the movers, as usual—
Wave of that sea of migration which keeps rolling on Westward."

But at the second keen glance he noted a visage familiar,
Whence trilled the tone of a voice he often had heard in New Salem.
"Friend of my heart, my good Lincoln, I now am going to leave you,

I have not seen you for days, else surely I
would have informed you;
Off I must march once more, over-stepping
the wide Mississippi,
Helping to found a new town and start it to
running;
Come along now—next year from our State
we shall send you to Congress."

Lincoln shook No with his head and saddened
more deeply in feature,
But the voice spoke on, though touched with
a tone sympathetic:
"Twice already I did thus, but this I feel is
my last time;
Mine is to build, but not houses so much as the
village's order,
And discreetly by law to direct the communal
welfare."

That was Squire Ebenezer who spoke, the
fountain of Justice,
Which he established wherever he founded a
town on the border;
This when done he persuaded the people to
build a good school-house
With its resonant bell as its voice to the
young and the older,

Calling together the brain of the place for lesson and lecture;
Thus a small university communal rose at the cente
Faintly forecasting the culminant height of the new education.
Deeper than anything else this lurks in the Squire Ebenezer:
That the fate of the school-house presages the fate of the village;
Yea he would carry his foreglimpse up to the State and the Nation.

Lincoln stood dazed for a moment, then mused to his friend in a study:
"I have heard you say that before, still I thought that you would not—
But methinks that the soul of this town is now leaving its body,
That which built it and kept it alive is leaving its members,
Aye the whole world is to me but a corpse with spirit departed."

Heartfull he turned from his friend, yet looking a farewell unworded,
Scarce ten steps had he trod—who is this whom he suddenly faces?

William the wainwright is migrating also
with Peter the blacksmith;
Peter the chatterer, now well-washed starts
playing his banter:
"Abraham Lincoln, you are the cause of my
leaving New Salem,
It is you who will fetch here new wheels, not
ironed, but iron,
When law-making next winter you go down
again to Vandalia."

So chaffed the blacksmith a humorous turn
to divert Lincoln's sadness,
When the wainwright added with eyes of
melting condolence:
"With the solace of time you may follow us
when we have settled."

Then at once burst up a geyser of sobs from
an underworld molten,
As the heart-hit mourner gave vent to the
seething within him:
"No, I shall hover around this fragment of
earth for a life-time,
Here is the shrine of my soul whose love I
shall never abandon,
Till with its image seared on my life I shall
stand up for Judgment."

Off he then turned to catch for his sighs a full breath of freedom,
While the train of the wagons went wavering over the landscape
In a rise and a fall as they wound through prairie and woodland
Joyously onward into the roar of the roiled Mississippi,
Bearing along in their bosom the communal soul of New Salem,
Which will arise when over the River and take a new body,
Yea in thousands and thousands of bodies afresh resurrected,
Symboled of old in the sacred brand borne to the young town-hall.

When the last white wisp of a wagon had swooned in the distance,
Lincoln had strolled to the knoll where stood once the centering school-house,
Now but a round ashen heap in whose midst lay the wreck of the belfry,
There as he dreamily stepped, he stumbled his foot on a fragment,
Chip of the bell which tingled a resonance to him though broken,
As if it still would remind him of days when it called him to study,

When he could hear the maidenly tones of
Ann Rutledge reciting,
Whom he weened to be speaking just now as
the voice of the ruins—
Bodiless voice, yet strangely concordant with
hers, from the ashes;
Then he bent over and read the weird word
of the school-bell's inscription,
Which in each letter came tongued on
breaths of the air by some presence—
But behold! there falls on his ear a new voice
now incarnate.
Still mid ruins it speaks, in accent familiar
yet trembling,
What! 'tis Mentor Graham grown old, the
school-master faithful
Haunting in anguish of soul the dolorous
scene of his life-work,
Yet with gushes of heavenward hope in the
downpour of sorrows;
Like a specter he spoke to the seeming spec-
ter of Lincoln:

"Though I descend to the sunset of life, new-
ly aged in a night-time,
I must go with the rest and elsewhere follow
my calling;
Mine is to teach the rude border, I have to
move on with migration—

But, O, Lincoln, thou shalt remain my remembrance eternal,
Waiting for birth the future lies nestled within thee already,
Pupil of all my pupils, through thee I shall live everlasting,
Always reborn in thy life with the work which is mine stamped upon thee!
And this town though it die will not fade from the soul of the people,
Sacred it shall be in memory, dare I pressage, by thy presence,
These rich days of thy youth here passed make it youthful forever,
Though from the map it be blotted by fate, no sign of it peeping,
Still it will last as a spirit and even be sung of with Lincoln."

Strange, but the schoolmaster, fluid before, turns suddenly solid,
And his features so molten shoot into the crystals of sternness,
As he starts to deliver the word of a judgment supernal:
"Not without reason divine this lot has befallen New Salem,
Frequently have I been threatened with ill on account of my doctrines;

For its act of suppressing free speech, itself
is suppressed now,
When it threw the lecturer into the river, it
followed,
When it burnt up his pages of print, it set
fire to my school-house,
Written all over these ashes of death I read
retribution,
Flamed down on it from Heaven for damn-
able deeds like Gomorrah."

So the good Mentor burst forth in one of his
rages prophetic,
With a tone of the voice of the preacher, the
thunderous Cartright;
First he would flare himself out at the world,
then wheel about inward,
Not at all sparing himself in his faults as he
sighed his confession:
"And I too must come under the doom of
the dying New Salem,
Forth I must go and begin the new school of
the backwoods,
With it the house and the bell in the belfry
shall be resurrected,
I shall drop in my time but my work must
be made self-renewing
Through those pupilled by me with my im-
press—such I deem thou art."

Mentor then stooped and took up a handful
of dust, still reflecting:
"This old body belongs to these ashes, but
I do not surely,
I am to make Death die, am to turn on him-
self the Destroyer,
Always rebearing my life in a higher regen-
eration."

With an eye of refulgence the speaker then
gleamed upon Lincoln:
"Death is a schoolmaster, stern and impar-
tial, far sterner than I am,
I too have gone to his school and have tasted
his discipline mortal,
Greatest of schoolmasters is he with weight-
iest lore, if you learn it;
That is your task now, O Lincoln, Death is
teaching your lesson
Out of the sorrow of love lost to rise into love
that is deathless,
Self-undone is the teacher when his high work
is perfected;
If thou wouldst live, thou art dead—if thou
wouldst die, thou art living."

As they walked and talked mid the ruins in
sombre reflection,

They had come to the fragment of bell with its Latin inscription
Readable still, yea perfect, without one break in a letter.
Fire had purified every line of the word to new splendor,
As it lay in its refuse upturned still gleaming its message.

Then spoke the schoolmaster tremulous still with the quake of his judgment:
"That inscription foresays that this bell shall arise and this schoolhouse,
Yea, this village, now dead on the march of civilisation;
I, too, this schoolmaster, I shall arise newborn in vocation.
Look again at the word! spell the gleam of its mystical letters:
Once I found it upon a mossed tombstone, and made it my prayer,
Then on the school bell I stamped it to ring out over the country,
Word of my deepest faith, true voice of the universe also.
Sol may burn like this schoolhouse, yet will arise with the aeons,
Cosmos, though ever dying, is ever afresh resurrected."

Then the schoolmaster centered his eye-shot
right into Lincoln's:
"And the loved one who passed will arise
in a new resurrection,
You will arise from grief of the mortal to
love the immortal,
That is, my Lincoln, thy schoolmaster's les-
son, the last one,
Make it thine own to guide all thy coming
career—thou wilt need it."

So they parted, uplifted each man with a ful-
ness of vision.
Dimly already the Dawn had stretched out
her daintiest finger,
Laying it on a white cloud as if she were
touching the bed-clothes,
Ready to spring from her couch in the East
with a kiss for New Salem,
Leaving her human Tithonus behind as the
ghost of a husband,
While she a Goddess undying embraces in
love the whole earth-ball.
Lincoln had wandered away in the night to
the mulberry's shadow,
Shrouding himself in the mantle redoubled of
Nature's own gloaming,
Twofold that mantle of darkness, without him
and also within him,

Till he is silently touched by the tenderest
glance of the twilight,
Which is the herald of day, new-born for the
world and for man too.
Up he leaps from his seat as if hearing the
soul of Aurora,
Hastes with a hope in his heart to the ashes
which tell of the schoolhouse,
There to search for the word of the promise
which heartened him bravely.
Soon he has found the fragment of bell that
holds the inscription,
This he takes in his hand and reads by the
light which is dawning,
Tenderly bears it away from the dust to a
destiny higher.

Now at the head of the fresh-sodded mound
which covers Ann Rutledge
Love has enthroned the talisman hinting the
turn of the ages,
Whispering hope unto man and the sun and
the stars—RESURGAM.

Historic Intimations.

Book I. The village of New Salem lay on the Sangamon River, about twenty miles north-west of Springfield, capital of Illinois. It was founded in 1829 (the date 1828 is the one given by Herndon). It lasted some ten or twelve years, suddenly springing up into bustling activity, and then rapidly declining. At present "a few crumbling stones are all that attest its former existence." It was situated "on a bluff a hundred feet above the surrounding country." At the foot of this bluff rolled the Sangamon, where stood the mill on whose dam Lincoln's boat was stranded (April, 1831)—an incident witnessed by the people of the village standing on the hillside. This was Lincoln's introduction to New Salem, where he lived about five years, in various employments.

Across the river from the village the valley of the river is about half a mile in width, reaching back to the hills. "The town never contained more than fifteen houses, all of them built of logs; but it had an energetic population of perhaps one hundred persons"

(Miss Tarbell, *Life of Lincoln*). "By 1840, Petersburg, two miles down the River, had absorbed its business and population." (Ditto.)

Book II. In the spring of 1832 the little steamboat whose name was *Talisman,* came puffing up the Sangamon from Bardstown past New Salem to the landing-place near Springfield. Lincoln was the pilot, as he well knew the little stream, and along the banks the people gathered hailing the advent of the first steamboat. Cannons and shotguns added to the noise: men and boys afoot and on horseback followed the vessel. On the bluff at New Salem stood a large expectant crowd, having a tumultous jollification over the outlook upon a dazzling future—all of which rested upon the dream of a navigable Sangamon. The steamboat had actually come all the way from Cincinnati and thus seemed to suggest the connection of the Sangamon country with the rest of the world by navigation.

Says Herndon: "I remember the occasion well for two reasons: it was my first sight of a steamboat, and the first time I ever saw Mr. Lincoln, though I never became acquainted with him till his second race for the Legislature, in 1834. After passing New Salem I and the other boys, on horseback,

followed the boat, riding along the banks." Even the poet was not absent, but sang the exploit in a little epic of which the following is a verse:

"Illinois suckers, young and raw,
Were strung along the Sangamaw
To see a boat come up by steam;
They surely thought it was a dream."

Book III. Lincoln's first candidacy for the Legislature (in 1832) was unsuccessful. Still he always looked back to his race with pride, saying in a brief autobiography written long afterwards that his own precinct gave 277 votes for him, and only 7 against him— which certainly indicated his local popularity. But in the rest of the county he was not well known. Before going to the Black Hawk War in 1832, he had announced his candidacy and had issued an address to the voters, which is still preserved (See Lincoln's Works, by Nicolay and Hay). In 1834 he was elected representative to the State Legislature, which then held its sessions at Vandalia, the capital. In this second race he seems to have largely recovered from his delusion—which he shared with the people—that the Sangamon was navigable.

Book IV. Already in 1834 the agitation for the new means of intercommunication—

the canal and railroad—had begun. Later it rose to the proportions of a great bubble which exploded and left the State deeply in debt and facing a financial crises. Lincoln was an ardent supporter of these "internal improvements."

On all sides were signs of the great migration to the North-West. The population of Illinois (set down as 269,974 souls in 1835), had almost doubled in half a dozen years. Chicago had begun to develop in the north-eastern part of the State.

Lincoln was commissioned Postmaster at New Salem May 7, 1833, under the federal administration of Andrew Jackson. The mail arrived once a week, not in great quantity, so that the saying soon became current that he carried the post-office in his hat. It has also been handed down that he read the newspapers which came in the mail, with consent of their owners, and then delivered them. Says Herndon: "Mr. Lincoln used to tell me when he had a call to go to the country, he placed inside his hat all the letters belonging to the people of the neighborhood and distributed them along the way."

Book V. Ann Rutledge was the daughter of the first citizen of New Salem, who was also one of its founders—James Rutledge, born in South Carolina and related to

the distinguished family of that name. Says Herndon, who knew her: "She was a beautiful girl—the most popular young lady in the village. One of her strong points was her dexterity in the use of the needle. At every quilting Ann was a necessary adjunct, and her nimble fingers drove the needle swifter than anyone's else. Lincoln used to escort her to and from these quilting bees, and on one occasion even went into the house."

But she was already engaged to a successful young merchant of New Salem, who went under the name of McNeall, but whose real name was McNamar. He had left town in the spring of 1834, with the design of returning soon; but he delayed, and soon stopped writing to his betrothed. Nobody knew what had become of him, or what were his purposes. Ann especially was in doubt: had he deserted her? Anyhow at this juncture Lincoln gradually became her suitor.

Book VI. Peter Cartright represents the preacher of the frontier better than any other known individual. He has left an autobiography which gives a simple account of his remarkable career. Above all men of his class he knew how to stir up the religious susceptibility of the borderer. He had come at an early day with Southern immigrants (from Tennessee and Kentucky) and had set-

tled in the Sangamon Valley, not far from Springfield. He was probably the greatest of all circuit-riders, his circuit at first "extending from Kaskaskia to Galena." He was a Methodist and the very king of revivals and camp-meetings. The South he had quit on account of his dislike of slavery; still he was a strong Democrat of the perfervid Jacksonian type. He did not hesitate to mix politics with his religion, being elected a member of the Illinois Legislature in 1828 and in 1832; in the latter year Lincoln was a candidate, but was beaten. Cartright was a candidate for Congress against Lincoln in 1846, but was badly defeated. The two men were of a different order of mind; they clashed repeatedly, both in the political and religious domains, though both were anti-slavery and born Southerners.

Jack Kelso, the poetical vagabond of New Salem, reciter of Shakespeare and Burns, has a place in all of Lincoln's Biographies.

Book VII. "As Lincoln pleaded and pressed his cause, the Rutledges and all New Salem encouraged his suit. McNamar's unexplained absence, and his apparent neglect furnished outsiders with all the arguments needed to encourage Lincoln and convince Ann. Although the attachment was growing and daily becoming an intense and mutual

passion, the young lady remained firm and almost inflexible. She was passing through another fire. A long struggle with her feelings followed. (Herndon and Weik's *Lincoln,* Vol. 1, p. 128.)

"All would have gone well if the young girl could have dismissed the haunting memory of her old lover. The possibility that she had wronged him, that he loved her still, though she now loved another, that she had perhaps done wrong, produced a torturing conflict." (Miss Tarbell's *Lincoln,* Vol. 1, p. 119.)

It should be noted that Ann Rutledge had a strongly religious element in her nature. It is this element which on the one hand intensified her conflict and on the other imparted to her a great consolation.

Book VIII. Vandalia, the capital of the State from 1820, was a town of less than a thousand inhabitants when Lincoln arrived there for the opening of the Assembly, December 1, 1834. This was composed of 26 senators and 55 representatives, nearlly all of Southern origin, mainly from Kentucky and Virginia. The bulk of the great migration came from the same source. "There were but few Eastern men, for there was still a strong prejudice in the State against Yankees."

"There was a preponderance of jean suits, like Lincoln's, in the Assembly, and there were occasional coon-skin caps and buckskin pantaloons. Nevertheless, more than one member showed a studied garb and a courtly manner. Some of the best blood of the South went into the making of Illinois, and it showed itself from the first in the Assembly." (Much more is to be found in the accounts of early Illinois histories and in the Lincoln biographies—see Miss Tarbell's *Lincoln,* Chapter VIII.)

"At this session of the Legislature (1834-5), Lincoln was anything but conspicuous. His name appears so seldom that we are prone to think that he contented himself with listening to border oratory and with absorbing his due proportion of parliamentary law" (Herndon). Other reasons can be given.

"Schemes of vast internal improvements attracted a retinue of log-rollers—members of the 'third body' among whom at this session was Stephen A. Douglas, who had come from Vermont only the year before," but was already in pursuit of an office, that of State's Attorney. (Herndon.)

"What opinion each formed of the other, or what the extent of their acquaintance, we do not know," adds Herndon. Possibly something is hinted in the tradition that Lin-

coln said of him after their first meeting: "He is the least man I have ever seen."

Book IX. Says Herndon, who carefully investigated this affair: "McNamar, true to his promise, drove into New Salem in the fall of 1835, with his mother and brothers and sisters. They had come through from New York, with all their portable goods in a wagon." Their arrival took place a short time after the passing of Ann Rutledge. Within a year McNamar married another woman —which fact may be taken as furnishing the key to his conduct.

Book X. Since the Black Hawk War, the northern part of the State had been rapidly filling up with settlers. There had been a good deal of agitation for the removal of the Capital to a more central locality. This was accomplished at the session of 1836-7, by the nine legislators from Sangamon County, called the Long Nine, on account of their stature, "all of them measuring over six feet in height and over two hundred pounds in weight," combined with intellectual ability above the average. Says Herndon: "The friends of other cities fought Springfield bitterly, but under Lincoln's leadership, the Long Nine contested with them every inch of the way," and finally won. In the preceding session (1834-5) there had been only talk

of the removal, not agreeable to the people of Vandalia.

Also during these years the agitation against slavery began to make its appearance in the West. Taunts, jeers, persecution, assassination even, greeted the early apostles of reform. The attitude of Lincoln was anti-slavery, but he disclaimed the name of abolitionist. (See his famous protest in the Legislature, dated 1837.)

Book XI. After Lincoln's return from his first session at Vandalia, he became engaged to Ann Rutledge. "Still the ghost of another love would often rise unbidden before her," says Herndon. "Within her bosom raged the conflict which finally undermined her health. Late in the summer she took to her bed. A fever was burning in her head. During the latter days of her illness, her physician had forbidden visitors to enter her room, prescribing absolute quiet. But her brother relates that she kept inquiring for Lincoln so continuously, at times demanding to see him, that the family at last sent for him. On his arrival at her bedside, the door was closed and he was left alone with her. What was said was known only to him and to the dying girl." Her death took place August 25th, 1835. (Herndon and Weik's *Lincoln*, Vol. I, p. 129.)

Book XII. Mentor Graham, the village schoolmaster, was intellectually the most important man in New Salem for Lincoln. The name seems a curious reminiscence of the Ithacan Mentor, the voice of the Goddess of Wisdom to the young Telemachus (See First Book of the Odyssey). It was Graham who told Lincoln that if he wished to be a public man and to make speeches, he must study grammar. But where could he get a text-book? New Salem did not possess a copy. The schoolmaster knew of one six miles away in the country. Lincoln at once walked to the place and borrowed it, and must have finally owned it, for he gave it to Ann Rutledge. Still the inscription can be read upon it in Lincoln's handwriting: "Ann M. Rutledge is now studying Grammar." (A facsimile of its title page can be found in Miss Tarbell's *Lincoln*, I, p. 65, with Lincoln's inscription). Graham also helped Lincoln in the study of surveying, when the latter had received the appointment of assistant surveyor of Sangamon County.

The pioneer schoolmaster followed the frontier settlements and never failed on the march of migration. He was found on the border in Kentucky, in Indiana and Illinois, during Lincoln's youth.

Book XIII. Says Herndon, friend, law-

partner and biographer of Linocln: "From my own knowledge and the information thus obtained (from the score or more of witnesses whom I at one time or another interviewed on this delicate subject) I repeat that the memory of Ann Rutledge was the saddest chapter in Mr. Lincoln's life" (I, p. 119). According to Herndon, it was "Dr. Jason Duncan who placed in Lincoln's hands a poem called *Immortality*. The piece starts out with the line: "Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud." He committed these lines to memory and any reference to or mention of Miss Rutledge would suggest them." As late as March, 1864, not many days before his death, he repeated the lines with a strange premonitory pathos. The poem was for him "an ever-singing dirge of the soul over the vanished loved one with the melancholy note of which his deepest emotions become concordant to the end of his days. Thus Lincoln reveals an immortal love, which will attune all the other throbbings of his heart, however profound and intense." (*Abraham Lincoln*, p. 172.)

Book XIV. The first effect of the blow upon Lincoln was to bring him into a condition verging toward insanity. Says Herndon: "He had fits of great mental depression and wandered up and down the river and into the

woods woefully abstracted—at times in the deepest distress. His condition finally became so alarming that his friends consulted together and sent him to the house of a kind friend who lived in a secluded spot hidden by the hills a mile south of the town, and who after some weeks brought him back to reason, or at least a realization of his true condition." (Herndon and Weik's *Lincoln,* I, p. 130-1.)

Doubtless at this time Lincoln made the greatest spiritual transition of his life, under the most severe mental and emotional strain.

Book XV. As already stated, New Salem barely lived a dozen years, if quite so long. The rapid rise and often the equally rapid decline of these border towns could be often witnessed in the early settlement of the West. And the spirit of migration was never wanting to the frontiersman. The new thing about this Western town-building was that its source was from below and not from above—from the people and not from those in authority. All felt the power in themselves to re-make their village elsewhere.

Book XVI. "Lincoln endures the awful strain and comes forth a purified soul from the discipline of Love, but he carries the mark with him all his life. What did it do for him?" That is a question pivotal for his

whole future; but different persons will answer it differently, according to their habits of thought and inner experience.

"The individual Ann Rutledge is gone, indeed, forever, but the love remains and will not depart. What is to be done with it? Eradicated it cannot be unless by tearing out the heart itself by the roots. But it can be transformed, or rather transfigured, and thus in a manner be preserved ever active and beneficent. From the individual it can be elevated into universality, and thereby not only save the man, but give him a new birth, a spiritual palingenesis. The problem with Abraham Lincoln now is: Can I transfigure the love of this individual Ann Rutledge, forever vanished as individual, into an universal love for humanity, ever-present and undying? Can I rise even through emotion from the one to the all? Verily he can and does; indeed the terrible ordeal has just this providential purpose: he must come to feel and perchance to see that the painful Discipline of Love is not to destroy it, but to eternize it by transfiguring it into the very personality of the sufferer, and thus making it the inner luminary which shines through character and deeds." (From *Abraham Lincoln,* an interpretation in Biography, p. 185.)

"Here we may behold, if not the original

germ, at least the grand flowering of that deepest and all-pervasive trait of Lincoln which we may exalt as his universal Love," which "has become at present the chief theme of anecdote, reminiscence, story, novel, and other literary utterance pertaining to him directly and indirectly." (Ditto, p. 185-6.)

"Though called upon to administer a national discipline as severe as his own personal discipline ever was, he did it not in hate and revenge, as everybody now recognizes" (Ditto). Finally may be added his tender confession made to a friend long afterwards concerning Ann Rutledge: "I think often, *often* of her now."

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